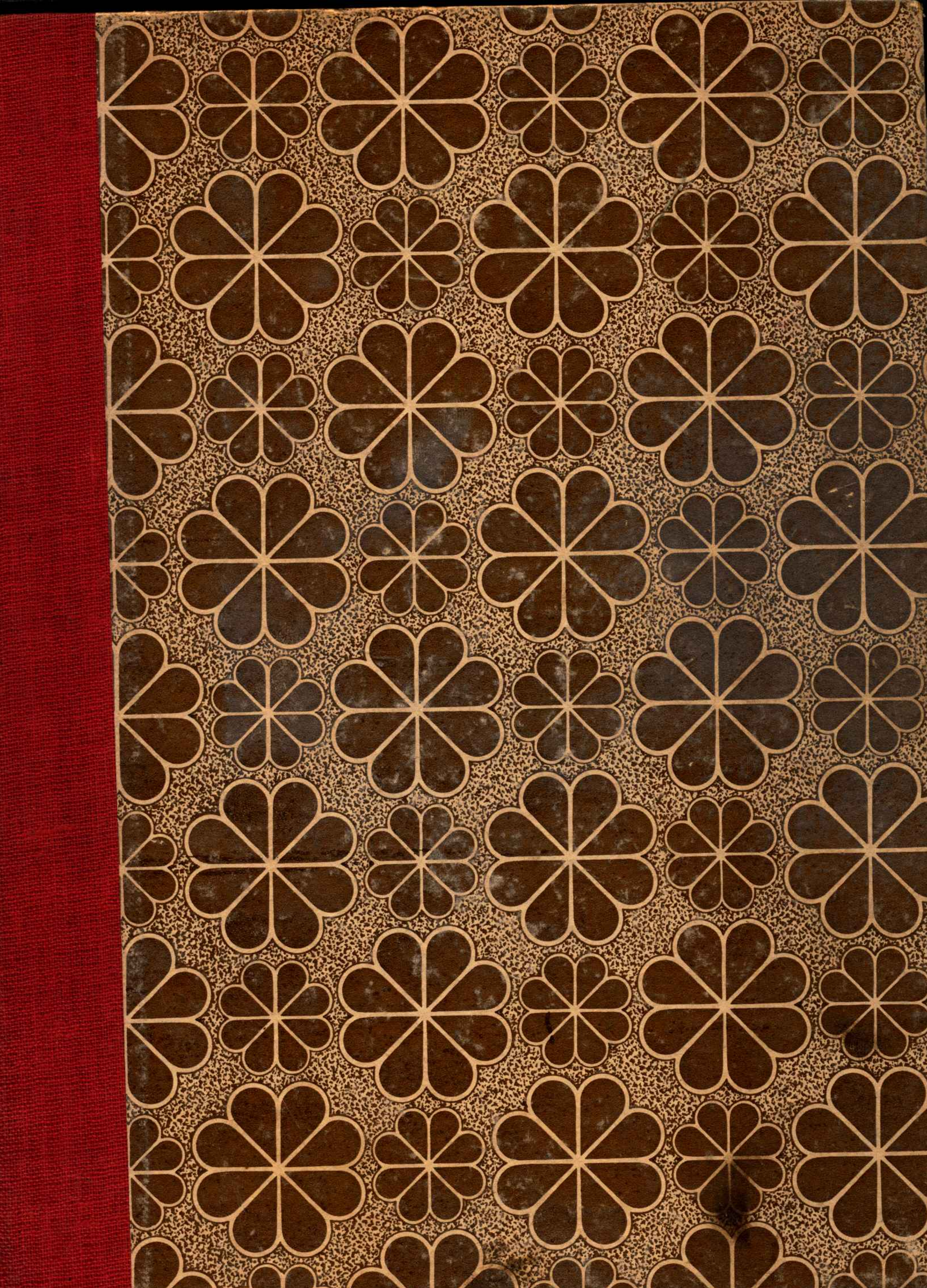


HANDBUCH DER ORIENTALISTIK

Herausgegeben von B. Spuler
unter Mitarbeit von
H. Franke, J. Gonda, H. Hammitzsch, W. Helck, B. Hrouda,
H. Kähler, J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw und F. Vos

ZWEITE ABTEILUNG

INDIEN

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON J. GONDA

VIERTER BAND, ZWEITER ABSCHNITT

HINDU TANTRISM

BY

SANJUKTA GUPTA • DIRK JAN HOENS
TEUN GOUDRIAAN



LEIDEN/KÖLN
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CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book tries to give an introductory survey of Hindu Tantrism. It is a product of joint effort. The three authors, although solely responsible for the parts written by them, have consulted together on the whole. This, they hope, has resulted in a certain levelling of differences of approach as well as in the purging, as much as possible, of mutual contradictions. Nevertheless, the reader will detect differences in the method of description and in the appreciation and selection of the sources; but in the authors' view this need not detract from the character of the book as a volume of the Handbuch destined for a general but scholarly introduction to the field. On the contrary, a certain variety of approach may serve as a means of convincing the student of the manifold and ever varying character of the conglomerate of religious traditions which we are wont to subsume under the term Tantrism. The outcome will be very different if we study Tantrism only from its earlier written sources in Sanskrit or if we describe its present-day practice. Besides, it is impossible to study a living religion in a completely "objective", matter-of-fact manner, although, of course, statements of facts and points of doctrine should be verifiable, sincere and unbiased. If the reader is able to collect from the following pages a fair impression of the main characteristics of Tantrism as an important and worthy offshoot of Hindu religiosity, the authors will feel amply rewarded.

The authors want to express their pleasure in thanking the Foundation for Scientific Research in Tropical Regions (WOTRO) of the Dutch Government for subsidizing a study tour made by Mrs. Gupta in December-January 1976-77; Dr. B. V. Dwivedi, Prof. V. N. Khiste, Pandit Vamanji Dikṣit, and Śrī Chandrashekhar Swami for their generous assistance during the collection of data; and Dr. Gunnar Carlstedt from Uppsala, Sweden, for kindly sending them a copy of some items of the periodical "Caṇḍī". For typing the bulk of the manuscript they are indebted to Miss M. Lamme and Miss W. van Putten of the secretarial staff of the Theological Institute at Utrecht.

ABBREVIATIONS : SANSKRIT TEXTS

ĀpŚS	Āpastambaśrautasūtra
AS	Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā
AT	Akulavīratantra
BĀU	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad
BhāgPur	Bhāgavatapurāṇa
BhāvUp	Bhāvanā-upaniṣad
BrS	Brāhmaṇasarvasva
BŚS	Baudhāyanaśrautasūtra
BŚuS	Baudhāyanaśulbasūtra
BVUp	Brahmavidyā-upaniṣad
BYT	Brahmayāmalatantra
ChU	Chāndogya-upaniṣad
DBPur	Devībhāgavatapurāṇa
D(evy)Up	Devī-upaniṣad
DhBU	Dhyānabindu-upaniṣad
GST	Guhyasamājatantra
GT	Gāyatrītantra
HirŚS	Hiraṇyakeśiśrautasūtra
HYP	Haṭhayogapradīpikā
IŚP	Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati
JB	Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa
JK	Jñānakārikā
JS	Jayākhyasaṃhitā
JSid	Jñānasiddhānta
JT	Jñānārṇavatantra
KālPur	Kālikāpurāṇa
KAN	Kaulāvalīnirṇaya
KCT	Kulacūḍāmaṇitantra
KJN	Kaulajñānanirṇaya
KKV	Kāmakalāvilāsa
KMT	Kubjikāmatatantra
KPS	Karpūrādistotra
KT	Kulārṇavatantra
KVT	Kālīvilāsatantra
LS	Layayogasaṃhitā
LT	Lakṣmītantra
MaiU	Maitrāyaṇīya-upaniṣad
Mbh	Mahābhārata
MM	Mahārthamañjarī
MMD	Mantramahodadhi
MNT	Mahānirvāṇatantra
MuU	Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad
MVT	Mālinīvijayatantra

NṢT	Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇavatantra
NT	Netratantra
NTS	Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā
PKS	Paraśurāmakalpasūtra
PM	Piṅgalāmata
PMS	Paramārthasāra
PrT	Prāṇatoṣiṇī
PT	Prapañcasāratantra
PTV	Parātriṃśikāvivaraṇa
PVN	Pūjāvidhinirūpaṇa
PYS	Patañjali, Yogasūtra
RKT	Rāvaṇa, Kumāratantra
RTU	Rāmapūrvatāpanīya-upaniṣad
ṚV	Ṛgveda
RYT	Rudrayāmalatantra
ŚatBr	Śatapathabrāhmaṇa
SKD	Ṣaṭkarmadīpikā
SL	Saundaryalaharī
SMT	Sammohanatantra
ṢN	Ṣaṭcakranirūpaṇa
ŚST	Śaktisaṅgamatantra
ŚT	Śāradātilaka
SvT	Svacchandatantra
ŚvU	Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad
TĀ	Tantrāloka
TaiĀ	Taittirīya-āraṇyaka
TanS	Tantrasāra
TBS	Tārābhaktisudhārṇava
ToT	Toḍalatantra
TrTU	Tripurātāpinī-upaniṣad
TrU	Tripurā-upaniṣad
TS	Taittirīyasaṃhitā
TSS	Tantrasārasaṃgraha
TT	Tantrarājatantra
TU	Taittirīya-upaniṣad
TUBh	Taittirīya-upaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika
VBT	Vijñānabhairavatantra
VidyT	Vidyārṇavatantra
VP	Vākyapadīya
VSS	Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra
VVR	Varivasyārahasya
YCU	Yogacūḍāmaṇi-upaniṣad
YHT	Yoginīhṛdaya(tantra)
YogT	Yoginītantra
YŚU	Yogaśikhā-upaniṣad
YTU	Yogatattva-upaniṣad

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI — Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
Āg. — Āgama
ALB — Adyar Library Bulletin, Adyar/Madras
ALS — Adyar Library Series, Adyar/Madras
ĀnSS — Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, Poona
BEFEO — Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris
CAS — Contributions to Asian Studies
cent. — century
CHI — The Cultural Heritage of India, 4 vols., Calcutta ²1953-62
CII — Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
CIS — Contributions to Indian Sociology, The Hague
GOS — Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda
HCIP — History and Culture of the Indian People, ed. R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker, 10 vols., London/Bombay 1941-...
HIL — A History of Indian Literature, Wiesbaden
IHQ — Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta
JAIH — Journal of Ancient Indian History, Calcutta
JAS — Journal of Asian Studies, Chicago
JRASB — Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
KSTS — Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, Srinagar (Bombay)
MS(S) — Manuscript(s)
NCC — New Catalogus Catalogorum, Madras
RASB — Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
RGG — Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
S. — Saṃhitā
Skt. — Sanskrit
TBG — Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Batavia (= Jakarta)
VS — Vikrama Saṃvat (era)
WZKSO — Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens, Wien
ZDMG — Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

BY

TEUN GOUDRIAAN

INTRODUCTION

Tantric studies : present position

Tantrism, a field of study almost generally neglected by earlier generations of Indologists, has often been subjected to misunderstanding, not to say misrepresentation and unearned disparagement. Western scholars with a liberal bourgeois background, starting from Christian norms and values or filled with enthusiasm for the Aryan element in the Indian tradition tended to consider this part of Indian religiosity as a medley of magic, superstition and "revolting" rituals; orthodox Hindu intellectuals — sometimes under British influence — were and are wont to see Tantric esoterism (sometimes denoted by a peculiar pejorative use of the word "mysticism") as a wilful breach of the social and ethical base of the *sanātana dharma*, the eternally valid code of religious practice. On the other side there were — and are — those who recognized in Tantrism a hitherto almost unused force of spiritual regeneration, "a view of life which offers a uniquely successful antidote to the anxieties of our time" (Rawson, *Art of Tantra*, front flap). A reliable introduction into the subject will have to steer clear of both extremes by presenting the matter as objectively and disinterestedly as possible.

Although some — especially Indian — scholars are conversant with Tantric theory and practice, very little has been done as yet by professional Indologists (at least for Hindu Tantrism, to which the present volume will restrict itself) in presenting scholarly studies based directly on the sources. It is disappointing to find that the same, often faulty or one-sided, statements made by earlier authorities are repeated again and again without checking in scientific as well as popularizing studies (cf. the instance of the "Gupta" or "post-Gupta" Ms. of the KMT : below, p. 22). The written sources have till now been made accessible mostly in an imperfect manner and in many cases not al all. They will have to be edited critically and — if ever possible — ordered chronologically before even the problems of interpretation can be satisfactorily stated (Ray, *Tantric Buddhism*, p. 175). Only then, comparative studies of the diverse aspects of the Tantric tradition can lay a firm foundation for a reliable overall description. This work should be supplemented by serious research into the still existent oral tradition — a difficult and urgent task. Without oral explanation, a number of passages from the written sources are bound to remain unclear

while secret meanings (whether intended by the author or established by subsequent tradition) will escape the student (Silburn, *Introd.* to the VBT, p. 8). However, even the interpretations given by pandits or gurus should not always be taken for granted. This research should be accompanied by accurately documented glossaries of Tantric terminology based upon extensive and unprejudiced collections of material. In the meantime, any survey of Tantrism, including the present one, can have only a preliminary character.

Recent instances of a correct procedure in dealing with the written sources of Hindu Tantrism of the Śākta denomination are Carlstedt's studies on the KT — regrettably written in Swedish — and, in another way, Dwiveda's edition of, and Sanskrit introduction into, the NST. Very useful, especially for the historian of religion, are also accurate excerpts or paraphrases such as that of the Indonesian JSid. by Soebadio, p. 7-46, or of the NT by Brunner, *Netra Tantra*, p. 125-197. Earlier work in the Tantras has partly been done in the form of collections and descriptions of Mss., for which the name of Hara Prasad Shastri (1853-1931) — who from 1891 on was in charge of the search of Mss. for the Asiatic Society of Bengal as successor to Rajendralala Mitra — should be especially mentioned. Farquhar (*Outline*), partly relying on an earlier collection made by the Rev. K. S. Macdonald, made mention of a great number of Tantric texts and tried to classify them chronologically; but this was done without an adequate base of manuscript study. Some old Mss. present in the former Durbar Library (now National Library) in Kathmandu, Nepal, were studied by P. Ch. Bagchi in 1929 and subsequent years, which resulted in that scholar's *Studies in the Tantras* — one of the very few reliable books on the subject. A praiseworthy activity was developed by Sir John Woodroffe (pseud. Arthur Avalon), a former Justice of the High Court at Calcutta in the colonial period, who with the help of pandits prepared some preliminary editions and translations in the series Tantrik Texts. His other publications are often unreliable because they are motivated by the desire to propagate Śākta Tantrism and to apologize against orthodox Hindus and Victorian missionaries. Very often he is indebted, even in his style and diction, to — sometimes unmentioned — others, while written sources in Sanskrit are seldom accurately accounted for.

Studies made by historians of religions (Eliade, Bolle, Beane and others) contributed important insights. Besides, these authors try to transpose Tantric terminology into the language of their own discipline (an extremely difficult task), or to discover a "potentially unified structure of thought and expression" (Beane, *Myth, Cult and Symbols*, p. IX). But as a matter of course they often base themselves too much upon a limited selection of the

material, or on material selected and presented inaccurately by others. An excellent study on Tantric — especially Kashmir Śaiva — sound speculation has been produced by Padoux, *Parole*. A very thorough knower of Tantrism, Gopinath Kaviraj, has published authoritative and thought-provoking studies, mainly in Hindi and Bengali: but they concentrate upon philosophy and lack adequate reference to sources. In Hindi is also the extensive survey of Tantric literature alphabetically arranged according to titles under the direction of the same scholar (*Tāntrika Sāhitya*). Of the only two serious attempts at a comprehensive survey of Hindu Tantrism (Chakravarti, *Tantras*; Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*), the former, although short and somewhat superficial, is the most reliable.

A Marxist interpretation was ventured on in 1959 by D. P. Chattopadhyay (*Lokāyata*). He tried to fill a gap by means of a coherent picture of the prehistory and socio-economic background of Śākta Tantrism; but his remarks are necessarily speculative, not based upon a direct study of the Sanskrit sources and even incorrect from the Marxist standpoint: whatever Tantrism or Śāktism may have been, certainly no revolutionary force created by the oppressed masses. The same approach has been followed up by N. N. Bhattacharyya (*Śākta Religion*). The book by R. N. Nandi (*Institutions*), a pupil of the Marxist historian R. S. Sharma, has the merit that in its restricted subject it makes full use of epigraphic sources, and the same can be said of the publications by the well-known epigraphist and historian D. C. Sircar.

Meaning and Scope of the term Tantrism

"Tantrism" is derived from "Tantra". This Sanskrit word, literally "extension", "warp on a loom", can be used in Sanskrit literary history for denoting any handbook or guide which sets forth a certain doctrine, or for its contents. In the history of Indian religion it is, however, used in a restricted sense (in the plural as well as the singular) for the scriptures which expound non-Vedic doctrine and practice, especially of the Śākta denomination, and again for their contents. Traditionally, Tantra is often explained by a reference to the verbal roots *tan-* "to stretch, expound" and *trā-* "to save", so that the term became an indicator for the soteriological importance of this literature.

The extremely varied and complicated nature of Tantrism, one of the main currents in the Indian religious tradition of the last fifteen hundred years, renders the manipulation of a single definition almost impossible. There is, accordingly, a general uncertainty about the exact scope of the word.

In our opinion, it is mainly used in two meanings. In a wider sense, Tantrism or Tantric stands for a collection of practices and symbols of a ritualistic, sometimes magical character (e.g. *mantra, yantra, cakra, mudrā, nyāsa,* all of them discussed further on in this book). They differ from what is taught in the Veda and its exegetical literature but they are all the same applied as means of reaching spiritual emancipation (*mukti*) or the realization of mundane aims, chiefly domination (*bhukti*) in various sects of Hinduism and Buddhism.[1] In a more restricted sense, it denotes a system, existing in many variations, of rituals full of symbolism, predominantly — but by no means exclusively — Śākta, promulgated along "schools" (*sampradāya*) and lines of succession (*paramparā*) by spiritual adepts or gurus. What they teach is subsumed under the term *sādhanā*, i.e. the road to spiritual emancipation or to dominance by means of Kuṇḍalinīyoga and other psychosomatic experiences. It is in this latter sense that "Tantrism" is usually known in India itself. The two meanings given above should not be differentiated too sharply, because it is often difficult to draw a line. It is important to remark at this point that the true Tantric sādhanā is a purely individual way to release accessible to all people, women as well as men (at least in theory), householders as well as ascetics.

At present, the practisers (*sādhaka*) of the Tantric system are mainly people who live an ordinary life within family and society. But beside this ordinary reality, they try to come into touch with a higher stratum of divine reality by a course of identification with their chosen deity (see below, p. 123) who is usually the Goddess.

Applying the wider sense, one can say that Tantrism or Tantric elements are found — in differing grades of frequency and intensity — in Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śāktism, Jainism and Buddhism; but no one will probably deny the prevalent position of Śāktism within the Hindu Tantric fold. In consequence thereof the Tantrism found in Śākta or in Śākta-influenced texts will be the main subject in the present book.

The essential role of Śāktism in the Tantric tradition is emphasized by various authors. Sometimes Tantrism and Śakti cult are even identified outright. But it seems best to consider, with Payne (*Śāktas*, p. 72) Śāktism and Tantrism as "two intersecting but not coinciding circles". On account of its "inclusive" nature, Tantrism is much more diffused. Śāktism is defined in different ways (Eliot, *Hinduism*, p. 11f.; Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*,

[1] Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 29 : "Brahmanic worship is all through permeated by tantricism"; Pratyagatmananda, *Realization*, p. 229; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 41, n. 2.

p. 158). Sometimes it is incorrectly identified with "the cult of female deities in general" (B. C. Raychaudhuri, in Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 61). It can shortly be characterized as the worship of Śakti (ŚST 1, 8, 26), i.e. the universal and all-embracing dynamis which manifests itself in human experience as a female divinity. To this should be added that inseparably connected with her is an inactive male partner as whose power of action and movement the Śakti functions (Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* II, p. 40; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 42f.; Nandi, *Institutions*, p. 119). It is therefore not enough to say that a Śākta worships the female as ultimate principle; nor is it correct categorically to state that Śāktism is characterized by the use of the five *makāras* (see below, p. 73). Like "Tantrism", "Śāktism" is sometimes also used in a wider meaning. It makes sense to distinguish an "independent" from a "dependent" variety (Bhattacharyya, *Śākta Religion*, p. 73). In the latter case, the Śakti(s) is (are) worshipped within the fold of another denomination (like Vaiṣṇavism or Jainism) without constituting the essence of its creed and practice, while in the Śākta sect proper the Śakti is the chief divinity. Although Śāktism is often defined also by means of typical ritual practices, it is advisable to restrict the use of this term for a world view oriented towards the Śakti, while Tantrism should be applied to a conglomerate of ritual and yogic practices and presuppositions.

Some of the constituents of Tantrism (in its wider sense) are summed up below:

1. Tantrism offers an alternative and practical individual road to salvation, characterized as a *sādhanā*, beside the Vedic one which is often considered to be antiquated (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 44; the following elements of this list are partly indebted to this author).

2. It recognizes and expounds mundane aims beside spiritual emancipation or final release as a lawful goal for a practiser. "Realization" indeed implies both aims which are hardly separable in the texts. "Domination" is an essential aspect of "deification". This again implies that Tantric methods are considered applicable for various sorts of practical attainments including astrology, medicine and magic. In practice, many written sources of Tantrism are pre-occupied with the description of supernatural abilities (*siddhi-*, "attainments" or the magical *ṣaṭkarmāṇi* "six acts"). There remains, however, always a connecting thread between the popular and the individual or esoterical; between the magical and the spiritual.

3. It teaches the practice of a special variety of yoga destined to transform the animal instincts and functions by creating an upward movement in the body along yogic nerve centres (*cakra*). The process is most commonly expressed as "rousing (or "raising") the Kuṇḍalinī" (see ch. VI). The

"esoteric yogic cult" which — at least in Bengal — lies at the base of Tantric sādhanā is succinctly and clearly described by S. B. Dasgupta (*Obscure Cults*, p. XXXIV-XL).

4. Connected with this yoga is the elaboration of a mystic physiology in which the "microcosm" of the body is identified or homologized with the "macrocosm" of the universe and the world of the gods. Insight into and meditation on the various aspects of this identification, concomitant with the worship of internal divinities, is necessary in Tantric sādhanā. Even during an external *pūjā* "worship" (see ch. V), the deity is invoked from the own heart and dismissed also there (PKS 4,1 and 5,23; PVN, p. 143). Passages on macro-microcosmic symbolism are collected in the PrT (Book 6, ch. 4).

5. Important are speculations on the mystic nature of speech and its constituents (the articulated sounds; in practice: the Sanskrit alphabet); the existence is assumed of a phonic creation parallel to the material phenomena.

6. This has been developed concretely in the very frequent use of generally short, often wholly or partly unintelligible formulas (*mantras* and *bījas*) invested with supernatural power by means of definite ritual procedures and made the object of cosmic symbolism.

7. General use of concrete devices like intricate formulas, geometrical designs (*maṇḍala*, *yantra*, *cakra*), gestures (*mudrā*) for the expression of metaphysical or other abstract principles (thus formulated by R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, in Woodroffe, *TT and KKV*, p. 131). This implies that such concrete resources are apt to be burdened with one or more symbolic meanings, by preference three, often distinguished by the terms *sthūla*- "coarse" or "material"; *sūkṣma*- "subtle", which may refer to the phonic plane; and *para*- "supreme" or "metaphysical".

8. Realization of the supernatural world by specific methods of meditation (*dhyāna*), involving in the first place the creation of mental images or pictures of gods and goddesses who may be worshipped internally. The deity thus created may be invoked for social, especially medical, aims.

9. Ambivalence of divine — and human — existence: the divine and the demoniac, as also the erotic and the destructive, are considered to be complementary aspects of the same awesome invisible reality (a point stressed by Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, p. 126).

10. The importance of female manifestations called Śaktis (see above).

11. The practice of realizing the double-sided nature of existence by an intentional, regulated contact — often performed only mentally — with socially disapproved persons or entities such as meat, wine, low-caste women

or bodily excretions. This "religious revaluation of 'worldly' data" emphasized by Bolle (*Persistence*, p. 69) is also found in the Bhakti current.

12. Emphasis upon the absolute necessity of initiation (*dīkṣā*) by a qualified spiritual guide or teacher (*guru*) — who is commonly identified with the chief deity — and of constantly following this guru's directions for spiritual practice (see ch. III).

13. The development of a complete set of ritual practices beside the traditional, Veda-oriented one. This created a "double framework" for the practice of Hinduism (Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 137, one of his best insights; Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 4f.).

14. A far-fetched categorization of reality, especially in the symbolism of numbers and of speech.

15. Further elaboration of speculations common in (or produced by) Brahmanism. Thus, the KT (6,72f.) distinguishes ten manifestations of Brahman as against the usual number of five; there occurs a symbolical explanation of the eightfold yoga in the NT (8, 9ff.).

16. A connection of the yoga mentioned under 3 with the very old alchemical practices of the Siddhas (see p. 23 and Eliade, Forgerons) and the body culture of the Haṭhayogins.

17. The existence of a special religious geography by the cultivation (also in symbolic form) of places of pilgrimage of its own (see p. 37f.).

18. The use of a special set of terminology or even of "code language", both of them requiring particular methods of exegesis which were originally meant to be handed over only orally by the guru.

The above characteristics need by no means to be present in their entirety in a Tantric text; but their boundary lines, like isoglosses, tend to converge. The decision at what point a text or sect begins to be called "Tantric" is very difficult. The traditions of the relevant groups sometimes contradict each other. For instance, the Pāñcarātrins — the followers of "Tantric Vaiṣṇavism" — decline to be called Tantrics because they do not want to be considered worshippers of the Mother Goddess.

As for Hinduism in general, it might be proposed for Tantrism also that Tantrics are those who are wont to call themselves by that name (or who, if questioned, admit themselves to be Tantrics). In the sequel, we shall concentrate upon the Śākta variety of Tantrism and return only shortly and intermittently to other varieties (Kashmir Śaivism, Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāñcarātra, Jaina Tantrism), while Buddhist Tantrism has, whenever possible, been left also out of the picture.

The sources

The sources of Tantric tradition are many and manifold and can be classified in various ways. There is, at first, the distinction between oral and written tradition. The Tantrics have always considered oral instruction by the guru as indispensable for the aspirant towards mystic truths. Expositions given by present-day gurus and their comments upon older texts are of course of prime importance as a means of access to modern Tantrism. Nor are they negligible as a source for the understanding of earlier phases of the tradition; but their evidence should be used with some caution because one never knows how far the oral tradition has remained true to these earlier phases. In any case, the scientific investigation of the still existing oral tradition has scarcely begun and the difficulties are so great that it might even remain an unborn child.

The written sources are divisible into two main groups: those in Sanskrit and those in modern Indian languages, Dravidian as well as Indo-Aryan. Although the Sanskrit sources are by far the most important, especially in the earlier phases of the history of Tantrism, the second group is by no means insignificant in size nor negligible in contents. Beside translations and paraphrases of Sanskrit texts, there are poems and hymns, books of magic, hagiographical literature, works by the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās in Bengali, etc. In many cases, the Tantric nature of these works is a matter of doubt. The present book is usually based upon the written sources in Sanskrit. Many of them have been composed in an abstruse and purposely dark style and in often ungrammatical language, while their contents are not infrequently incoherent. Many particulars of the ritual or points of doctrine have purposely been omitted or are only vaguely hinted at. Technical terms remain unexplained. Mantras are sometimes only indicated by codes. These and other peculiarities render the study of Tantric texts a slippery and often frustrating task which is complicated still further by the imperfection of the Mss., the lack of critical editions and the forbidding problems of date and authorship. For the history of Tantrism, non-Tantric sources are also of some importance. We mention classical Sanskrit court literature, philosophical texts and inscriptions. Iconographical and other archaeological material, although seldom referred to in this book, also deserves attention.

The Sanskrit sources lend themselves to a natural division according to denominations. A general principle is that the term Saṃhitā "collection" is reserved for the texts of the Pāñcarātra, Āgama "(book of) tradition" for those of Śaivism, and Tantra for those of Śāktism (*Inde Classique*, I, p. 423; Gonda, *Medieval Literature*, p. 2); there are, however, important

exceptions. Traditionally, the Samhitās are 108 in number (in reality, there are more of them). Of special importance among them are the Sāttvata, Jayākhya, Pārameśvara, Pauṣkara and Āhirbudhnya Saṃhitās and the Lakṣmītantra. Of the Śaiva Āgamas (28 according to tradition), the Kiraṇa, Kāmika, Mṛgendra and Raurava are well-known.[2] Other important texts are the Svacchanda, Mālinīvijaya and Netra Tantras which are especially venerated (as well as the Mṛgendra Tantra which seems to be the "philosophical" part of the Mṛgendrāgama) by the Kashmir Śaivas, but also by the Śāktas. The famous Śaiva Tantric philosopher Abhinavagupta wrote his Tantrāloka "Light on Tantra" about 1000 A.D. It is often difficult to distinguish between Śaiva and Śākta sources, because the latter denomination developed within a Śaiva context or background. On the other hand, the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and Śaiva Āgamas have much more in common with each other than with the Śākta Tantras. The former two groups are usually handbooks for temple worship conducted by priests, the latter tend to concentrate upon individual practice.

The Śākta texts are the Tantras par excellence. The texts themselves occupy much space in giving lists and classifications of this literature. They are not unanimous about the number of Tantras, but the number 64 is most frequent among them. Among the lists of 64 Tantras which are found,[3] also Śaiva Tantras are sometimes included. The real number of Śākta Tantric texts is much greater. The most important among them seem to be the Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava and the Yoginīhṛdaya (which together form the Vāmakeśvara Tantra), the Tantrarāja (all focusing on Śrīvidyā worship with Tripurasundarī as the chief goddess), the Kaulajñānanirṇaya (tenth or eleventh cent), Kubjikāmata, Kulārṇava (between 1000 and 1400 A.D. according to Carlstedt), Śaktisaṅgama (sixteenth cent.), Paraśurāmakalpasūtra (seventeenth cent. or earlier), Mahānirvāṇa (late eighteenth cent.?). The dating of all these texts is usually a difficult matter. The Rudrayāmala, of which many smaller texts declare themselves to be a part, belongs to a certainly old group, the Yāmalas (see Bagchi, *Studies*; there are also the Brahma- and Jayadratha Yāmalas, and others). But the part of the text which is now available in edited form (the Uttara Tantra) shows unmistakable signs of lateness and may have been added to the oldest core afterwards.

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[2] For these texts, see J. Filliozat, *Les Āgama Çivaïtes*, in: N. R. Bhatt, ed. of Rauravāgama, vol. I, p. V-XV; Gonda, *Medieval Literature*, p. 180ff.

[3] Cf. Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 19ff.; Dwiveda, *Introd. to NST*, p. 23ff.; Awasthi, *Rahasya*, p. 12ff.; Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 141.

Besides the Tantras themselves which are usually anonymous, there exist several digests which sometimes range over the whole of Tantric tradition. Their author is generally known, at least by name. The most important among them are the Śāradātilaka by Lakṣmaṇadeśika (eleventh cent.), the Prapañcasāra Tantra ascribed to Śaṅkara (but in reality without doubt the product of a somewhat later author from his school), the Mantramahodadhi by Mahīdhara (sixteenth cent.) and compilations like Kṛṣṇānanda's Tantrasāra (Bengal, sixteenth or early seventeenth cent.) and Rāmatoṣaṇa's Prāṇatoṣiṇī (early nineteenth cent.). There are also independent works as well as commentaries written by learned Brahmans well versed in philosophy. The most famous — beṣides the works by Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja of the Kashmir Śaiva school — are the commentaries by Amṛtānanda and Bhāskararāya on the Yoginīhṛdaya, by Rāghavabhaṭṭa (about 1500 A.D.) on the Śāradātilaka, and by Lakṣmīdhara on the Ānandalaharī; independent works are Pūrṇānanda's Kāmakalāvilāsa (sixteenth cent.), Bhāskararāya's Varivasyārahasya (eighteenth cent.; both the latter works are on Śrīvidyā), and the literary production of Kāśīnātha Bhaṭṭa (eighteenth cent.) (for more details, see Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 66ff.). There are still other genres such as Upaniṣads (Tripurā, Devī, Bhāvanā and others); Stotras or hymns, the most famous of which are the Saundaryalaharī to Tripurā (its first part is commonly known as Ānandalaharī) and the Karpūrādistotra to Kālī; and Purāṇas or insertions in Purāṇas (Kālikā Purāṇa; Devīmāhātmya in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa). A special group is formed by the magical Tantras like the Śābara, Uḍḍīśa, Uḍḍāmara and Dattātreya Tantras and the Siddhanāgārjunakakṣapuṭa. They have been very popular and the history of their tradition is accordingly very complicated. The Jainas have their own Tantras like the Bhairavapadmāvatīkalpa.

There is also an immense variety of practical ritual guides (*prakaraṇa*, *paddhati*) such as the Nityotsava by Umānanda, the Śyāmārahasya "the Secret of the Black Goddess", or the Śrīvidyānityārcana "Regular Worship of the Śrīvidyā".

CHAPTER ONE

TANTRISM IN HISTORY

Legendary Origins

Many Tantras contain information on the mythical descent on earth (*avatāra*) of the body of sacred texts (*śāstra*). They are unanimous about the origin of the tradition from the Highest Being (Śiva). He proclaimed it, usually with a view to enlightening His spouse, Devī, the Great Goddess, who on some occasion came to express a desire for elucidation on spiritual matters. The Śākta Tantras are usually presented as dialogues, or rather interviews, between this divine couple, although in a small minority of texts (for instance, the RYT) Devī is the proclaimer. Such a text is called a Nigama in contrast to Āgama which can be used for any Tantric text or for the tradition as a body.[1]

There are different speculations about the exact nature of this primeval revelation. Abhinavagupta tried to integrate it within the four evolutionary stages of speech. In Bhāskararāya's opinion (Setubandha on YHT 7,47, where he quotes the SvT), the sacred truth came from the Supreme Brahman to Svacchanda, a Bhairava (fearsome manifestation of Śiva), and afterwards in succession to the Independent (*anāśrita*) Īśvara, Devī, Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Vidyeśvara and Śrīkaṇṭha, from whom it came down on earth. The primal urge is generally considered by Tantric philosophers to be a reflection of the Supreme — still unseparated from Its Śakti — on Itself (see also ch. II). This reflection involves a certain discursive relation: the prototype of the guru-disciple relation. A characteristic case is that of the BYT. This text ascribes itself to a tradition which originated in the Bindu (concentrated creative principle), which became awakened by Śakti and over Sadāśiva and other divine manifestations came down to Śrīkaṇṭha in the form of 125.000 anuṣṭubhs (ślokas, stanzas of two lines of sixteen syllables each). The latter elaborated it into millions of verse, but Īśvara, who is introduced as the real revealer of the BYT, at the beginning of that text declares to present the original 125.000 to Devī who is the hearer (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 102f.; Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 217). Of this

[1] Many Tantric authors, however, identify "Nigama" with "Veda": Awasthi, *Rahasya*, p. 7; Sastry, *Sidelights*, p. 4f.

amount, a part is received by a Brahman from Kurukṣetra and another part by a certain Devadatta of Oḍra (Uḍḍiyāna in the extreme North-West of the South Asian subcontinent) who hands it down to his disciples. Other texts give different expositions, but the principle is always the same: an unbroken succession (*sampradāya, paraṃparā*) of teacher-taught relationships from the divine origin of all existence up to the time of writing down the version destined for the present generations. The first stage is inexplicable: like a bolt from the blue, the Śāstra in its first stage of unevolved speech came forth from Pure Consciousness (Abhinavagupta; quoted by Awasthi, *Rahasya*, p. 4).

The gap between the divine and the human stages in the tradition is sometimes accounted for by a legend that a human being overheard the conversation between Śiva and Devī. In the Nātha cult, this role is played by its legendary founder, Matsyendranātha, who acted in the form of a fish (*matsya*). In the Kula tradition of Kashmir, there were four first human expounders for the four successive world-periods which are generally admitted by Hinduism. They look like fabulous "culture heroes" with a perhaps totemistic background (TĀ ch. 29; cf. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 544f.):

Name	*Meaning of name*	*World-period*	*Direction of worship*
Khagendra	Lord of Birds	Satya (first)	East
Kūrma	Tortoise	Tretā (second)	South
Meṣa	Ram	Dvāpara (third)	West
Macchanda	Fish?	Kali (present age)	North

Completely different is the account of the origin of the most sacred mantra of Tripurā, the Śrīvidyā. In this more Veda-oriented tradition, the classical gods and sages are prominent. The origin of the Vidyā lies with Kāma who handed it down to twelve Vidyeśvaras "Lords of Wisdom" or "Lords of the Vidyā" among whom figure Manu, Agastya, Durvāsas and some Vedic gods (Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 29; the same, ed. of YHT, p. IVf.).

The Vedic sages (*ṛṣi-*) continue to play an important part in the legendary prehistory of Tantrism. Prominent among them are Vasiṣṭha, who is said to have obtained enlightenment in Tibet (RYT 17), Durvāsas, Agastya (also the name of the first of the Tamil Siddhas: Zvelebil, *Murugan*, p. 222; the same, *Poets of Powers*, p. 71), the group headed by Sanatkumāra (MVT 1,[1] ff.), while also Paraśurāma, the sixth Avatāra of Viṣṇu, figures as a Ṛṣi and a devotee of Tripurā. But the function of the sages differs from that given to them in the Veda: the Vedic Ṛṣis spontaneously "saw" the sacred

words in their inspired minds; those of Tantrism were only the first receivers of the mantras from the mouth of the Highest Being or one of Its lower manifestations. Therefore also a deity can fulfil the role of an Ṛṣi (like Mahākāla for the mantras of Kālī).

Tantra and Veda

Hindu religious tradition can be — and has been — reduced to two chief denominators: the Vedic and the Tantric. The relations between these two are extremely complex and can be presented in a few pages only at the cost of gross simplification.

Although the followers of the Tantra have often been accused of heterodoxy by the upholders of the Veda-oriented brahmanical system (some instances are discussed by Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 29 ff.), Tantrism usually did realize very well the prime importance of the Veda as a source of revelation. Hence it tried in various ways to attain a satisfactory solution of this ever-recurring problem: how to settle matters with the generally — although often only by lip-service — venerated oldest source of the Indian religious tradition, and especially: how to account for the apparent deviation from and even defiance of that source. There have been various attempts at integration. Some authors maintained that the tradition is in principle undivided — and, indeed, the Pāñcarātra tried to prove that it came forth from a lost Vedic school (Gonda, *Medieval Literature*, p. 49 f.) — but that there were important reasons for a modification of emphasis and ritual procedure. One of these reasons is that the Veda was considered to be no longer comprehensible for mankind in the present deteriorating stage of world history (the "Kali age"). It was, however, also said that Vedic worship was lacking in results (KT 12,36 and others); hence it is understandable that Vedism has also been described as a preparatory stage to Āgamic or Tantric practice. Among the Kaulas, Vedācāra is the first of the seven ācāras or ways of practice which culminate in the Kulācāra or Kaula conduct (KT 2,7 f.).

For some adherents of Tantrism who strove after a compromise between both standpoints, the practice of Vedic as well as Tantric ritual (especially *dīkṣā*) is a necessary condition to spiritual emancipation. On the other hand, the Tantric dharma is described as the essence, the best part of the Veda, "churned" by Śiva from the ocean which is the Veda with the churning-stick of intuitive wisdom (KT 2,10; cf. Kane, *History*, V, 2, p. 1051, n. 1692).

A growing concern with Vedism is to be observed in brahmanical circles of followers of Śāktism, especially the Śrīvidyā worshippers who

styled themselves Samayācārins "Practisers of the Covenant" or Dakṣiṇācārins "Practisers of the Right" (see below, p. 44). Very often, the Veda is quoted as an authority, while a great number of Vedic stanzas are applied — sometimes completely without reference to their original meaning — in a Tantric ritual context. The names of the four Vedasaṃhitās (Ṛg-, Sāma-, Yajur- and Atharvaveda) continue to occupy their place in Tantric numerical symbolism; thus, the RYT (17,87ff.) connects them with four of the internal cakras (Mūlādhāra etc.), allotting the highest position to the Atharvaveda. Presumably because of its preoccupation with magical rites, this latter text was often claimed as the Vedic source of the Tantric tradition and thus the earliest Tantric text "avant la lettre" (Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 136f.; Renou, *Destin du Veda*, p. 11). Many Tantric Upaniṣads ascribe themselves to the AV, while pivotal tenets such as the doctrine that Śakti is Brahman are said to derive from the same source (Devy Up., 2). Although there seems to be no justification for this, a number of later doctrines and practices are indeed foreshadowed by what is found in some earlier Upaniṣads and even Brāhmaṇas (some material is to be found in Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 12f.; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 16). The most important connexions lie in the sphere of speech symbolism and etymology (see below, p. 90f.; micro-macrocosmic agreements (ChU 2; often, e.g. in ŚatBr 1, 3, 2, 13, established by way of analogies in numbers); interiorization of sacrifice; sexual significance of the ritual (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 256ff.; Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 213); early instances of speculation on a yogic body (ChU 8, 6; cf. Kane, *History*, V, 2, p. 1063, n. 1717); guru worship (ŚvU 6,23); growing importance of "Śaktis" (Kane, *History*, V, 2, p. 1043f.; Arbman, *Rudra*); and emergence of the idea of an all-embracing female cosmic power; description of magical practices. Some Vedic practices are continued in early Tantras, for instance representation of the gods in sacrificial utensils (NT 3, 70; a case of *vyāpti* "mystical penetration" according to the commentator Kṣemarāja); traditional penances developing into Tantric vratas (Lorenzen, *K. K.*, p. 73ff.); the practice of ascribing to each mantra a ṛṣi, Vedic metre and deity (*ṛṣyādinyāsa*).

Despite the impressive number of such agreements, the differences in emphasis, mutual connection and, above all, in ritual and doctrinal systems are so obvious that it would be quite out of the place to consider Tantrism and Śāktism as mere continuations of Vedic tradition. The agreement is, however, large enough to substantiate the hypothesis that in some cases the corporeal or spiritual descendants of Vedic theorists came to occupy themselves with Tantric subjects. There must have been a continuation of Vedic esoterism side by side with amplified and intellectualized restatements of non-

Vedic yogic and popular beliefs and practices; a process in the course of which both currents could not fail to influence each other.

Origins and Early History

The problem of the antiquity of Tantrism is a very difficult one. Here also, it is necessary to distinguish between "Tantric elements" and "Tantrism" as a ritual and doctrinal system. One can take for certain that some elements, and perhaps even early stages of the system, are much older than their first emergence in the literature. We have seen that the Veda contains many features which later re-appear in developed form in the Tantric sources. But without doubt the Tantra is rooted also in very old traditions of unsystematized yoga and body cult, shamanism, medicine, magic white and black, astrology, religious eroticism and folkloristic ritual which found little or no place in pre-Tantric literature. To some of these traditions, parallels have often been adduced from other cultures — and rightly, as long as one is not tempted to draw unwarranted conclusions about sensational borrowings. It is wise to start as long as possible from indigenous origins; indeed, some of these phenomena, in the first place mother worship and sex cult, can be explained as offshoots of a primitive agricultural economy (in contrast to Vedic pastoralism) which led to a ritual emphasis upon fertility symbolism and eroticism (Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 232ff.; Ruben, *Entwicklung der Religion*, p. 231). But while dealing with such hypothetical matters, it is very easy to overshoot the mark by undue generalization. Vedic ritual also teems with fertility magic and references to agriculture do occur in it often enough. The emphasis on the female element in Śāktism and Tantrism has also been explained (by R. P. Chanda and others) from matriarchal structures in prehistoric societies. In recent times, matrilineally oriented forms of society were found to be still prevalent among some Ādivāsi ("original inhabitant") tribes on the outskirts of Hindu society in which woman plays an important part in the production process. The remains of the Indus Valley culture adduce some evidence of worship of female deities and of the existence of religious symbols akin to those which are popular in Tantrism as well as in common Hinduism.[2] That orgiastic rites must have formed part of the folklore of at least some peoples in Ancient India appears

[2] J. Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, London 1931, Vol. I, p. 52; Kosambi, *History*, p. 54; Gonda, *Change and Continuity*, p. 32f.; A. Parpola, *Interpreting the Indus Script, II*, in: Studia Orientalia, 45, 1976, p. 125-160, and other studies on the Indus script by the same author.

from the Mahābhārata and Jaina canonical texts.[3] Although their systematic description occurs only in comparatively late sources, "left-handed" practices with alcoholics and women must date at least as far back as the other Tantric elements like mantra, mudrā or nyāsa.

It may be of some interest to trace further in a few lines the oldest post-Vedic evidence for Śakti cult and other kinds of mother worship. Attempts at a periodization of the history of Śāktism have led to widely divergent results. Gopinath Kaviraj (quoted by Sharma, *Śakti Cult*, p. 5) preferred a classification into three periods: a. Ancient or pre-Buddhist (no independent Śākta sources known); b. Medieval or post-Buddhist (up till the twelfth cent. A.D. inclusive, the most productive period); c. Modern. The latter period was also productive, but its output is for the greater part of secondary importance. In the above system, it is not clear what Kaviraj meant by "pre-Buddhist", but perhaps we have to consider this period to be closed with the disappearance of Buddhism as a major religion from India. The date of 1200 A.D. as a boundary line is not substantiated by clear evidence. Others, for instance N.N. Bhattacharyya, applied quite different divisions (Bhattacharyya, *Śākta Religion*, division into chapters), likewise on rather subjective grounds. A reasoned periodization is extremely difficult because of our lack of adequately dated sources for the older period. The emergence and development of Śākta elements in literary sources seems to be largely a function of the process of absorption of local, regional or tribal female deities within the ideological system of the "great tradition" of Hinduism guided by Brahmans (cf. also Beane, *Myth, Cult and Symbols*, p. 37f.). The recent tendency to explain the rise of Śāktism as a kind of protest against Aryanism or Brahmanism, however, amounts to unwarranted simplification.

Opinions about the time during which Śāktism as we know it became a major factor in the religious life of India are again widely divergent, although the sixth or seventh century A.D. are most often mentioned as the decisive period. The best thing that can be done is to consider the available evidence with care and to try to constitute a coherent picture out of it. In Sanskrit religious and court literature, the references to mother cults are not numerous throughout the Vedic and Epic periods — but they exist, chiefly in the the form of hymns directed to Durgā and other mother goddesses; these are continued on a larger scale in the Purāṇas. There is, for instance, a famous legend of Durgā as a sister of Kṛṣṇa in the

[3] A. Parpola, *South Indian Megaliths*, Madras 1973, p. 48: rites of the Vāhīkas and the Madras, both in the North-West, according to Mbh. 8,44ff. (= Crit.Ed. of the Mbh., 8,30,9ff.). — On occult rites with women referred to in Jaina sources: Nandi, *Institutions*, p. 160.

sixth book of the Mbh. and in the fifth book of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (fifth cent. A.D.?).[4] The Devīmāhātmya, one of the basic texts of Śāktism, was included in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa perhaps before the seventh cent. (Winternitz, *Geschichte*, I, 473, note, referring to Pargiter). The famous poet Kālidāsa (fourth cent. A.D.), a Śaivite, in the concluding stanza of his drama Abhijñānaśakuntalā calls Śiva *parigataśaktiḥ* "embraced by His Śakti", and the introductory stanza to his Raghuvaṃśa addresses Pārvatī and Śiva as the parents of the world, united just like speech and meaning. He also mentions a number of mother goddesses, but generally speaking Śāktism is not at all prominent in the works of this author. There are, however, many references to the Śakti cult, especially to its spectacular aspects — for instance, human sacrifice — in court literature from Bāṇa (seventh cent. A.D.) onwards. Reference is often made to the worship of a group of Mothers, by preference seven, but other numbers are also found (see also below, p. 65). The worship of Mothers in a group or circle must have enjoyed wide popularity during these centuries. In Tamil literature, the cults of mother goddesses are mentioned already in the oldest texts (first centuries A.D.). In all such cases it is difficult to decide how far these "Mothers" also functioned as "Śaktis", i.e. in connexion with inactive male partners. It has been suggested that the "marriages" between a god and a goddess in cult centres may have been the result of an amalgamation of two different cults based upon different social and economic structures. This may serve to explain why the typical village goddess in Mahārāṣṭra, for instance, is "mother", but "unmarried" (Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, p. 86f.); a comparable case is that of Paśupati and Guhyeśvarī in the Nepal Valley described by Übach (*Nepālamāhātmyam*, p. 18). It may also be suggested that in such cases the god and the goddess came from different sections of the population with their own economic function and social position.

Iconographical evidence for mother goddesses, especially Durgā Mahiṣamardinī "Slayer of Mahiṣa (a buffalo demon)", dates back to the pre-Christian era. Only in the seventh century A.D., however, images of Mothers — including the groups of Seven Mothers and Nine Durgās — became more frequent.[5] Inscriptional evidence dates from the fifth cent. A.D. with the inscription of Gangdhar as their probably first specimen; it

[4] For a survey of references to Śaktis in Purāṇas, cf. Sharma, *Śakti Cult*, p. 37ff.; for some Devī myths translated from the same group of texts, see. O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, p. 238ff.

[5] Majumdar, *Ancient Bengal*, p. 550; Nandi, *Institutions*, p. 151f.; H. D. Bhattacharyya, in: *The Classical Age*, HCIP, Vol. III, Bombay 1954, p. 447f.; the same, in: *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, HCIP, Vol. IV, 1955, p. 339f.; T. V. Mahalingam, *The Cult of Śakti in Tamilnad*, in: Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 28.

refers to a temple destined for the worship of a group of Mothers (Fleet, *CII*, Vol. III, p. 76-78; cf. Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 52). Such temples seem to have been constructed from that period onwards. On coins, goddesses appear already in the second cent. B.C. in the North-West of India (B. P. Sinha, in Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 53; Bhattacharyya, *Śākta Religion*, p. 49). It has been argued from numismatic evidence that the first Śākta rulers in Bengal appeared at the end of the sixth century during the upheavals which occurred at the end of Gupta rule (Bela Lahiri, in Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 34ff.). But the remark made by R. C. Majumdar (*Ancient Bengal*, p. 517) is still valid, viz. that a definite judgment on how far Śāktism dominated in Bengal before the period of Muslim rule is very difficult to give. An important criterion of dominance of a certain religious movement is its acceptance as an official cult by rulers. It is difficult to find evidence of this for Śāktism before the time of the Gurjara-Prātihāras, who reigned from the eighth to the eleventh cent. (Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 105; Mishra, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 28). The claim of the early Cālukyas of Badami that they were nourished by the Seven Mothers shows the versatility of their propaganda, but cannot be considered as a proof of their Śāktism.

From the preceding rapid survey it can only be concluded that the origins of Śāktism are bound to remain a mysterious affair; that much depends on the way how the words Śakti and Śāktism are interpreted; and that conclusive evidence of a dominant position of Śakti cults in certain parts of South Asia cannot be found before the seventh or eighth cent. A.D. Besides, we have to reckon with important regional differences which scarcely appear from Sanskrit literary sources.

The question of the antiquity of Tantrism is necessarily related to that of Śāktism. The safest way to assess the *terminus ante quem* of the crystallization of Tantrism into a system is to ascertain the date of the oldest Tantric texts. Here again, much depends on what is understood under "Tantra". If the word is meant to include the Vaiṣṇava Saṃhitās of the Pāñcarātra school and the Āgamas of the Śaivas, there is a possibility that Hindu Tantric literature existed already in the fifth cent. A.D. or even earlier. A few remarks on early Buddhist Tantric literature are, however, desirable in this context. Of the early Buddhist Tantras, the Guhyasamāja has been dated — on scanty evidence — as early as the third cent. A.D. (B. Bhattacharya). Tantric elements like Dhāraṇīs (spells in a certain kind of structured prose) were included in Buddhist texts which have been translated into Chinese in the fifth century.[6] But the Tibetan tradi-

[6] Padoux, *Parole*, p. 43, n. 4, referring to G. Tucci, *Animadversiones Indicae*, in JRASB, New Series, vol. XXVI, 1930, p. 128.

tion dates the Buddhist Tantras only after Dharmakīrti, that is in the seventh century at the earliest (Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 219f.). Be that as it may, the problem of the relative antiquity of Buddhist and Hindu Tantrism, hotly contested, remains still undecided. Putting the question in terms of chronology is, it seems, even misleading. Without doubt both Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism were based upon older traditions handed down and developed by people who perhaps in some cases did not care much about their denominational position. Moreover, it seems certain that the Buddhist doctrinal tradition can never have developed an offshoot so completely foreign to itself like Tantrism on its own accord. The Tantric deities and practices in Buddhism must have been derived from other sources, viz. Brahmanic ritual and doctrinal speculation, yoga culture of the siddhas, or popular beliefs often introduced in Hinduism and Buddhism alike.[7]

Turning now again to Hindu texts, we can say that of the Pāñcarātra sources, the JS has been placed in the fifth cent. A.D.[8] The Sāttvatasaṃhitā may be still older. References to worshippers of Vāsudeva called Sāttvatas or Bhāgavatas are present in various sources long before the fifth century, but there is no proof of Tantric elements in them. In any case, the Pāñcarātra system is older than the Trika system of Śaiva philosophy in Kashmir and has been utilized by thinkers of that school (Schrader, *Introduction*, p. 18f.; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 59).

For the Śaivas, inscriptional and other sources prove the existence of regular cults already in the earliest centuries A.D. (Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism etc.*, p. 115f.; Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 214f.). The founder of the Pāśupata school, Lakulīśa or Lakulin, seems to have flourished in the second cent. A.D. It is, however, very difficult to ascertain if and in how far these cults had a "Tantric" character. The evidently Tantric sect of the Kāpālikas became popular in certain parts of Western India during the seventh cent. A.D. (Lorenzen, *K. K.*, p. 12f.). The Kashmir Śaiva schools date from the beginning of the ninth cent. at the latest (Silburn, translation of VBT, p. 67; Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 137f.), but lists of gurus seem to prove that they go back some centuries earlier, perhaps to the fourth century. There is no unanimity about the date of the oldest Śaivāgamas, but it is quite plausible that the most important of them were in vogue as sacred texts about

[7] A case in point is the introduction of Heruka and Ekajaṭā: van Kooy, *Worship of the Goddess*, p. 162, 170; on Tārā, cf. in this connection D. C. Sircar, in Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 91.

[8] B. Bhattacharya, *Introduction* to the edition of the JS, p. 34; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 43f.; but see the critical remarks made by Gonda, *Medieval Literature*, p. 53f. — For Tantric elements in the JS, cf. Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 218f.

800 A.D. at the latest (cf. Gonda, *Medieval Literature*, p. 164). Among them were some texts which preferred to call themselves Tantra (SvT, VBT, MVT) and which were revered sources of inspiration for Abhinavagupta (about 1000 A.D.) and other exponents of the Trika school (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 62f.). In contradistinction to the Āgamas and Saṃhitās which were mainly intended to serve as practical guides for external and communal worship, these texts laid much stress upon internal worship, mysticism and secret esoteric knowledge of mantras for which there was no room in the temple cult and its descriptions. This tendency must have increased with the development of individual Tantric worship and yoga. Certain Upaniṣads are among the oldest sources of Tantric yoga methods (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 121-143); some of them have been translated by Jean Varenne (*Upaniṣads du yoga*, 1971). The most important of them are the Dhyānabindu, Nādabindu and Yogatattva Upaniṣads.

An important proof for the use of Śaiva Tantras for communal worship is found in a Cambodian inscription of about the year 1052 A.D. according to which four of them called Śiraścheda, Vīnāśikha, Sammoha and Nayottara (the term Tantra is not used) served as the base for a new royal cult directed by the court priest of king Jayavarman II from 802 A.D. onwards. The titles of these works occur in some MSS. of the Yāmala group preserved in Nepal. Internal evidence suggests that the Yāmalas were produced by circles which developed a tendency towards Śāktism. P. Ch. Bagchi (*Evolution*, p. 217) — perhaps exaggeratedly — credits the authors of the Yāmalas — by tradition they were the eight Bhairavas, manifestations of Śiva — with some important new developments among which are the Śākta orientation and the rendering accessible of their sādhanā to non-Brahmans. Among the MSS. of this group a few have been dated before 1000 A.D. (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 5f.; 93-114). However, the datings of MSS. need careful revision by competent scholars. For instance, too much speculation has been based solely upon the assumed early post-Gupta (or even Gupta) script of an old MS. of the Kubjikāmata Tantra, a decidedly Śākta text. In reality, the MS. is written in an early variety of Śāradā script from medieval North West India (K. R. van Kooy, in ZDMG 1977, Suppl. III, 2, p. 88).

We have to admit that the question of the origin and early development of Tantrism is rendered extremely delicate by such chronological problems and by the stereotypic character as well as the subjectivity of references to Tantric practices in non-Tantric sources. Detailed and reliable studies on individual features (such as, for instance, the emergence and early development of Kuṇḍalinī-yoga) are extremely rare.

With the emergence of the "Kula path", which can be proven to have taken place not later than the ninth century and perhaps even goes back to the fifth or fourth cent. A.D.,[9] Tantrism came to develop its probably most characteristic representative, in which the worship and mysticism of the divine Śakti became the most prominent element. (This does, however, not mean that all Kaulas were, or are, Śāktas). The probably oldest extant Kaula text, the Kaulajñānanirṇaya, can be dated in the eleventh cent. or earlier (Bagchi), and refers to older sources; while Abhinavagupta also mentions a substantial number of written authorities of (another branch of) the school. The same period witnessed the appearance of the Śāradātilaka, the comprehensive digest written by the Śaiva abbot Lakṣmaṇadeśika which deals with such topics as sound and mantra mysticism, initiation, magical powers and the Tantric worship of deities in a manner which suggests the existence of a well-established tradition.

Another important component of Tantric tradition, the body culture of the Siddhas, who taught the realization of "immortality" by means of bodily perfection and who were often believed to possess the elixir of life, must have been in existence long before this period. Their most famous representative, Siddha Nāgārjuna (not to be confounded with his namesake, the founder of the Buddhist Mādhyamika school), who is especially revered in Tantric Buddhism, but who was also credited with the authorship of an important handbook of magic, is said to have lived in the seventh cent. A.D., although he has been also dated on good grounds in the first half of the tenth century.[10] The group of the "Eighty-four Siddhas" is also usually placed within Buddhism. According to Eliade, the Siddhas brought a "new revelation' which would have taken place between the seventh and the eleventh centuries A.D. and which contained elements of Vajrayāna Buddhism, Śaivism, magic, alchemy and Haṭhayoga. The oldest Tamil Siddha, Tirumūlar, perhaps flourished in the seventh cent. A.D.; the apogee of the Tamil Siddha literature, however, lasted from the tenth to the fifteenth century (Zvelebil, *Poets of Powers*, p. 18; 73; Zvelebil, *Murugan*, p. 221 ff.). The magic lore, which is almost universally present in Tantric literature, is partly a direct continuation of practices recorded in late Vedic texts; there are also references to sorcery executed by Brahmans and unorthodox monks in the Buddhist and Jaina canonical literatures. Books of magic must

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[9] Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 546f.; 577; Silburn, ed. of the MM, *Introduction*, p. 14; Lorenzen, *K. K.*, p. 49.

[10] Tucci, in JRASB, 1930, p. 137, according to Bagchi, *Introduction* to the KJN, 1934, p. 27f. — For literature on Siddha Nāgārjuna, see Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 277, 387f.; 398.

have existed long before the tenth century A.D. Bāṇa (seventh cent.) in his prose romance Kādambarī describes an ascetic who owned a collection of such manuscripts. The presence of magical fragments among the Sanskrit texts preserved in Bali and in Central Asia is another proof of the antiquity of this kind of literature.

Besides, it is important to notice (as has already been observed for Śāktism) that the development of Tantrism also must have obtained most important stimuli from royal patronage. This is easier to prove for Buddhist than for Hindu Tantrism, although patronage of Vajrayāna Buddhism perhaps also served as an indirect factor stimulating Hindu Tantric schools. A significant date must have been the election of Gopāla who was a follower of the Vajrayāna to the kingship in Bengal about 765 A.D. The same school counted persons of royal descent among its foremost propagandists in Kashmir. Many Vajrayāna Siddhas were associated with Kāmarūpa and Pāla rulers in Assam and Bengal. It may be that the unstable political situation in Northern India during the post-Gupta period, especially the seventh and eighth centuries, opened unprecedented opportunities of development for tendencies which before that time had remained in the background. Weakening of the centres of authority enabled aristocrats of lower position who came to be associated with such tendencies to expand their power.[11]

The non-Tantric sources on the early development of Tantrism generally show themselves, as has been remarked above, very subjective, often hostile, and cannot fail to give distorted evidence. But nevertheless they are very important and deserve to be evaluated in a careful study which goes beyond a mere enumeration of text-places. Of isolated references in other texts, one of the most interesting is without doubt the description in the Vaikhānasa Smārtasūtra (8,6f.) of "good" and "bad" ascetics.[12] A most interesting group of sources is formed by the Sanskrit court literature from the seventh cent. A.D. onwards. Mention may be made of Bāṇa's prose romances Kādambarī and Harṣacarita; Daṇḍin's prose romance Daśakumāracarita; Bhavabhūti's drama Mālatīmādhava; Rājaśekhara's drama Karpūramañjarī; and Somadeva's Yaśastilaka in a mixed style of prose and verse — all

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[11] Cf. Prakash, *Aspects*, p. 226ff., 232, for Kashmir. The connections of Tantric Śaiva maṭhs with royal houses of Central India are wellknown; cf. Prakash, *Aspects*, p. 286; Mishra, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 10, 14.

[12] The text presumably dates from the fourth cent. A.D.; discussion of this place in Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 146f., who, however, fails to refer to the interesting Skt. commentary for which see Caland's translation of the VSS, p. 195, n. 2, and especially W. Eggers, *Das Dharmasūtra der Vaikhānasas*, Göttingen 1929, p. 79f.

of them dated well before 1000 A.D. From the eleventh and twelfth centuries two important sources are another Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara, a famous collection of tales set within a frame story, and Kalhaṇa's literary historical chronicle Rājataraṅgiṇī, both from Kashmir. All these sources — except perhaps the Rājataraṅgiṇī — have in common a tendency to sensationality in their presentation of Tantric adepts and their rites. The Tantrists described in them can be classified into three types: awesome (impressive personalities who possess secret means of enforcing their will), villainous (malicious ascetics who attempt to secure dominion over supernatural forces by sacrificing heroic kings or beautiful young ladies), and ridiculous (impostors or dupes who consider drinking wine and flirting with women to be an easy way towards release). There is also a marked preference for descriptions of the evocation of spirits.

Of another kind are the objective data of Tantric influence found in non-Tantric sources such as the Purāṇas and the Dharma literature.[13] References to Tantrism in travel accounts by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims or by medieval Arabic and European authors are scarce (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 275, 278, 287f.; Prakash, *Aspects*, p. 333f.).

Remarks on the Subsequent History of Tantrism

About the year A.D. 1000, the process of development of Tantric schools, doctrines and rituals as well as the permeation of the traditional Hindu religious culture with Tantric elements seems to have reached its height. From that time onwards, Tantrism is richly attested in written as well as non-written sources. Among famous temples in which worship of Tantric deities was conducted are the Vaitāl Deul temple (eighth cent.?) and the Vārāhī temple of Chaurasi (tenth cent.), both in Orissa, and the Yoginī temple at Bherāghāṭ (tenth cent.). The iconography of these and other cult centres is of great interest (cf. Banerjea, Religion, p. 129f.). This period also witnessed a great vogue in erotic sculpture, which should, however, not too readily be associated with Tantrism (a good discussion of the subject can be found in Desai, *Erotic Sculpture*, ch. VII, p. 112-145). Śankara

According to Śākta tradition, the famous Śaiva philosopher Śaṅkara was a Śākta and was most influential in promoting Tantric beliefs and rituals in India, especially the worship of the Śrīvidyā. He is also the reputed author of the PST and some important Śākta hymns, in the first place the

[13] Collections have been made by R. C. Hazra in IHQ, 9, 1933, p. 678ff.; ABORI, 15, 1933-4, p. 220ff.; 16, 1935, p. 202ff.

Saundaryalaharī (see W. Norman Brown, ed. of the SL, *Introduction*, p. 27f.). This alleged position of Śaṅkara can best be explained as a retrograde projection of the situation which in course of time developed for unknown reasons within the maṭhs reputedly founded by Śaṅkara and some South Indian temples where Śakti worship in the Śrīvidyā method came to be a regular feature.

Among those tantrically oriented religious leaders who have played a very important role mention may be made, besides Abhinavagupta, of Matsyendranātha (tenth cent.?), said to be the founder of the Kaulayoginī cult as well as of the movement of the Nāth Yogins which exists until today. His pupil Gorakṣanātha enjoys a perhaps still greater popularity. Lack of space prevents us to say more about this legendary figure and his following; the Nāth Yogins do not belong to Śākta Tantrism.[14] The first of the Eighty-Four Siddhas, Lui-pa (Lohitapāda), is perhaps identical with Matsyendranātha.

A still more shadowy figure is Śrīkaṇṭha. His name is mentioned in the Mahābhārata in connection with the promulgation of Pāśupata doctrines, while the Yāmalas many centuries afterwards revere him as the Guru who was responsible for the diffusion of the sacred knowledge down on earth. He is also the reputed author of the Piṅgalāmata and often recurs among the first names in certain lists of gurus. He may have been a brahman resident of a village near Prayāga, but it is also possible that several persons with the same surname have merged their identity in the tradition (Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 25; Hooykaas, *Cosmogony and Creation*, p. 131).

Among famous historical authorities figure Lakṣmīdhara, the propagator of the Samayācāra school (sixteenth cent.; see also below, p. 44); Rāghavabhaṭṭa, the commentator on the ŚT (he lived in Varanasi at the end of the fifteenth cent.); Kṛṣṇānanda Miśra, the Bengali author of the Tantrasāra (sixteenth or seventeenth cent.); Bhāskararāya, the main theoretician of the Śrīvidyā system,[15] and his pupil Umānandanātha, both hailing from South India and belonging to the eighteenth cent.; and Kāśīnātha Bhaṭṭa, the eighteenth-century follower of Dakṣiṇācāra and prolific writer of books

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[14] On the Nāth Yogins, see G. W. Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kānphaṭa Yogis*, Calcutta 1938; Dasgupta, *Obscure Cults*, p. 217-395; 425-441; 442-460; Sukumar Sen, in CHI, Vol. IV, ²1956, p. 280-299; K. Mallik, *Nāth Sampradāyer Itihās*, Calcutta 1950 (in Bengali); K. Mallik, *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati and other works of the Nātha Yogis*, Poona 1954, Introd., p. 1-32. Other titles are mentioned by Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 403.

[15] On his life, see R. Krishnaswami Sastri's *Introduction* to the ed. of the Varivasyārahasya by S. Subrahmanya Sastri in the Adyar Library Ser., vol. 28, Adyar ³1968, p. XVII-XXXIV; on the guru tradition founded by him: Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 583ff.

and pamphlets against the Vāmācārins. These and other authorities and their works have been discussed by Chakravarti (*Tantras*, p. 66ff.). The regular appearance of important and influential gurus and the incessant literary production of Śāktism and other forms of Tantrism attest to an uninterrupted tradition which must have known its ups and downs but has gone on in much the same way for centuries. More research has still to be done in trying to find out the circumstances under which the Tantrists worked and propagated their tenets, and especially on the development of their doctrines by external and mutual influences. The study of later Tantric literature seems to reveal an ever tightening grasp of Brahmans and other intellectuals on the movement — or, as one could as well say, an ever greater hold of Tantrism upon the traditional bearers of Indian literary culture. Varanasi, from an early period onwards a centre of traditional learning, also became a favourite resort of Tantric teachers.

On the other hand, Śākta Tantrism sometimes had a hard fight against rival religious movements like the Vaiṣṇava revival of the fifteenth cent. in the Ganges area and the North-East. In Bengal, tradition records — perhaps anachronistically — a far-reaching animosity between Kṛṣṇānanda and the deified Vaiṣṇava mystic, Caitanya (Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 74). The Vaiṣṇavas in medieval Bengal developed a special kind of Tantric sādhanā called Sahajiyā (from *sahaja-* "natural, inborn") with as its most important characteristic the theory, and sometimes the ritual practice, of divine love exemplified in its most pure form in the feelings towards another's wife (*parakīyā*); for their particular method of sexual yoga they were indebted to the early medieval Siddhas of the Buddhist Sahajayāna, which in some respects differs from the ordinary Tantric method (Bose, *Sahajiyā Cult*; Dimock, *Hidden Moon*; Dasgupta, *Obscure Cults*, p. 131ff.). A similar tradition is continued up to the present day by the Bāuls, a community of householders as well as religious mendicants who regard themselves as outside the pale of the caste system. At the same time, the Sūfīs of Moslem background played an important role in the development of the mystic movements in Bengal. In Assam, the Vaiṣṇava movement became an ideological guide for the protest against the bloody ritualism of the Śākta aristocrats who occasionally (reign of Gadādhar Singh, 1681-1714) even seem to have indulged in persecution of other faiths. The Vaiṣṇava revival was introduced into this region by Śaṅkaradeva in the sixteenth century.[16]

[16] On the interesting history of Śāktism in Assam, see E. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Calcutta-Simla ^{2}1926 (^{1}1905), p. 168f.; Neog, *Śaṅkaradeva*, p. 82f.; 111f.; 365; Basu, *Assam*, p. 225ff.; 347ff.; 64.

Modern Tantrism

The renewed interest paid to Tantrism by Bengal aristocrats in the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century resulted in the writing of (probably) the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra and of digests like the Prāṇatoṣiṇī and the Haratattvadīdhiti. From the eighteenth cent. date also the famous Bengali Śākta lyrics by Rāmprasād Sen. A very stimulating renewal movement within Śāktism developed around Rāmakṛṣṇa (1836-1886; cf. Isherwood, *Ramakrishna*).

In the present century, Tantrism as a system of religious practice still flourishes in limited circles all over India. In Bengal, Śāktism is still the prominent denomination, while it continues to occupy an important position also elsewhere. Śakti worship is said to exist in all Advaita maṭhs (W.N. Brown, *Introduction* to the ed. of the SL, p. 27 and 29; Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 30). In the Panjab countryside, even the Sikhs often pay reverence to Devī's manifestations (I. P. Singh, in : Vidyarthi, *Aspects of Religion*, p. 199). Tantric worship in Śākta cult centres at present is most often "puritanized" (Sharma, *Śakti Cult*, p. 270). The ritual is transmitted "through family groups, down lines of teacher-pupil descent" (Rawson, *Art of Tantra*, p. 16). Some modern thinkers, in the first place Aurobindo Ghose, have undergone the influence of Tantrism (on Aurobindo and Tantrism, see Bolle, *Persistence*). Among the living Tantric gurus there are famous names. Tantric associations exist, i.a. the Śākta Sammelana in Prayag and in Varanasi; they are active in publishing pamphlets and periodicals, the best known of which is the monthly "Caṇḍī". There are centres of instruction like the Shākta Sādhana Peeth in Prayag. The individual sādhakas are all considered to be loosely connected with Advaita maṭhs, which thus serve as a kind of unofficial nerve centres. Besides, there are centres (*ākhrās*) set up by sādhakas who are not incorporated within a traditional lineage of gurus. There is, however, nothing like a registration. Tantric propaganda is spreading in India as well as in the West. There are cases of initiation of Westerners by Tantric gurus. Books on Tantric yoga and on magic (*indrajāla*) can be bought cheaply and easily in Indian bookstores. Despite all these activities, however, it can scarcely be doubted that traditional Tantrism as a way to release able to capture the minds of the many is a thing of the past.

Social Position of the Tantrics in History

Like all other religious movements, Tantrism did not originate or develop in a vacuum but must have been conditioned on all sides by the economic and social setting which happened to prevail. It has been argued that Tantrism had rooted in a movement of the masses which reacted against social ills and the excesses of the established religion. But the data at our disposal do not confirm this. Like the Buddhist path, the Tantric sādhanā — although primarily intended for householders, not for ascetics — is a purely personal affair concerning the individual self's release from the bondage of existence (or the acquisition of dominion within it). Even where the movement did succeed in absorbing or reshaping popular religious ceremonies with communal aims in the social as well as the religious field, it did not try to direct its followers towards a greater self-consciousness in these matters, but on the contrary served to interiorize and symbolize what might have been genuine expressions of communal needs and desires. This process must usually have been directed by intellectuals, as can be concluded already from the prominence of Sanskrit among the Tantric literary production. The development of Tantrism as it is known to us through its literature is an interesting aspect of the highly original way in which the religious formulators of medieval India were able to expand and consolidate their hold upon the religious life of the subcontinent. It is unclear if there really existed (as is held by Bolle, *Persistence*, p. 45) a tension between the avowed striving after the common weal and the hyper-individual sādhanā which was actually being practised. The assumption of such a tension may well be characteristic for Western minds in the post-Marxian period. If it existed, one of the means of overcoming the problem must have been the interweaving of symbols of social content into the network of interiorized worship.

Among those who belonged to the first formulators of Tantric systems, there must have been a substantial number of professional priests to whom the conduct of worship in temples or other cults of common interest had been entrusted. An interesting case is that of Śivakaivalya, a guardian priest of the Śivaliṅga in a temple in Cambodia who came to act as a court priest (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 2; 18f.). One could also point to the "Dravidian ascetic" in Bāṇa's Kādambarī (par. 216), presumably a non-Brahman, who also had the control of a sanctuary (cf. Altekar, *Rāshtrakūṭas*, p. 293). The Śaivāgamas, Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and some older Tantras were still preoccupied with the description of temple worship. Even at present, some of the Tantric full-time practisers act as temple priests,

preferably in cult centres of Devī, besides adding to their income by the practice of astrology or magic. Some of these people in ancient and medieval times held a position (sometimes hereditary) as domestic priest (*purohita*) of a ruler or aristocrat. It seems that in most cases Atharvaveda Brahmans served in that function. Their public responsibilities must have induced them to search for ever newer and stronger methods of safeguarding the welfare of the ruler, the subjects, and as a matter of consequence also of themselves. This was without doubt one of the major reasons of the development of the magical component of Tantrism. Intellectuals like them were probably active in systematizing originally unconnected rituals and designing new methods out of existing traditions; a deposit of such activities is to be found in the NT (as has been shown by Brunner, *Netra Tantra*). Those with mystical leanings who were in contact with yogins — or who served aristocrats of that type — came to develop interiorized variants of external rituals by a process not unlike that which led to the speculations recorded in the Upaniṣads which were made on the base of Vedic rituals.

Many Brahmans from non-Atharvaveda *śākhās* (branches of Vedic tradition) must also have felt attracted to Tantric methods. Lorenzen (*K. K.*, p. 11) refers to an inscription which mentions a member of the Kālamukha sect who belonged to the Hārīta clan (*gotra*) and for his ordinary ritual followed the Vedic Āpastambasūtra. Bhāskararāya belonged to a Ṛgvedaśākhā and lived up to the ritual duties which went with that position. It is clear that among the Brahman followers of Tantric methods there were theoreticians of outstanding ability like Abhinavagupta and his predecessors who were well versed in the Veda and in philosophy. Those among them who had a training in the philosophy of grammar — a subject which was definitely associated with Śaivism — were best qualified to develop the sound mysticism which played such an important part in Tantric theory (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 53f.). One should emphasize with Padoux the difference between pure philosophy of grammar and the utilization of linguistic material as a concomitant to yoga methods; but there are interesting cases of specialists in grammar who conducted Śaiva worship as well (Bhattacharya, *Religions brahmaniques*, p. 48). The Śaiva maṭhs and ashrams were probably important centres of such activities. The leading part played by learned Brahmans in shaping Tantric systems becomes clear at once by a study of rituals of highly intellectual structure like the worship of Tripurā in the NST (1,78ff.). But many of their followers and even many propounders of independent views and practices, although most often able to speak or write some Sanskrit, were not familiar with higher Brahmanical learning.

Another category of practisers was formed by the probably always rather

numerous yogins and ascetics, "renouncers" who tried to find a direct access to the state of individual release outside the normal frame of Indian society. Their predilection for wandering or settling away from the centres of Hindu culture would bring them into contact, not only with the common people of Hinduized areas, but also with non-Hindu peoples and tribes who worshipped strange deities and practised deviating religious customs (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 54). Unhampered as they were by the authority of upholders of dogmatic discipline or canonical scripture, they freely set to work integrating these various influences into methods of their own. The results of such experimentation are clearly discernible in typical concepts of Tantric yoga like the "vertical phases of meditation" (see p. 61) or the Kāmakalā doctrine which is present in a preliminary stage in yogic Upaniṣads (DhBU 87f.; YCU 62f.). In practice, many of these ascetics were active for the benefit of the people as predictors, exorcists or magicians. This would give them a great influence on the minds of many believers, so that they became able to act as gurus and in this way to propagate their ideas and methods.[17] Since the Middle Ages, many of these people belonged to the Nātha sect; the Siddhas, also highly respected and popular, probably played a similar part. Also Śāktism has its "saints"; without being masters of literature or philosophy, they excelled in practical religiosity and they often executed Tantric sādhanā. The famous Rāmakṛṣṇa (see above) can be considered one of them (on the Śākta saints of Bengal, see Ch. Chakravarti, in CHI IV, ²1956, p. 416-418). Among the yogins and other Tantric saints there have been a substantial number of women who may have acted independently or as "śaktis" of male gurus. The frequency of terms like *yoginī* or *ḍākinī* in Tantric literature renders this conclusion unavoidable. Without doubt, large numbers of impostors constantly tried to make their living by presenting themselves as "yogins". The frequent sarcastic descriptions of such people in Sanskrit literature must have produced amused reactions of recognition with the cultured public. References to them are by no means absent in Tantric literature itself.

Tantrism attracted people from all social strata. According to the great majority of Tantric authors, the rites are open to people of all castes and creeds (JT 23,28f.; KT 3,74f.; MNT 3,92; Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 331). It is even held in the texts that during the rite there is no difference

[17] Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 300f.; for a modern case, see Surajit Sinha, *Some Aspects of Change in Bhumij Religion in South Manbhum, Bihar*, in : Man in India, vol. 33, 1953, p. 148-164, on p. 161f. — On yogins as miracle workers, see Briggs, *Gorakhnath*, p. 1; 23.

whatsoever between those who belong to different castes, because all men are Śiva and all women are Śakti. "All varṇas become Brahmans" (KT 8,96); "in the circle (of worship) all come to mutual identity like the streams which flow into the Ganges" (KT 8,98). Consequently, also the teaching of the sādhanā is open to all. In theory, even a Caṇḍāla may act as guru; and cases of gurus of low descent are indeed known (one can compare the important function which untouchables sometimes have in the worship of Durgā: Payne, *Śāktas*, p. 70f.). On certain occasions, the texts even express a preference for anything which is associated with low social standing or with the breaking of social taboos. The KT (9,55) states that "anything which is despised in the world is honourable in the kula path". Five kinds of bodily excretions are the five means of purification in daily worship according to the KJN (11,11).[18] Of course, this was an important factor in creating for Tantrism its bad repute with the orthodox. But anti-caste statements should never be read outside their ritual context (cf. Farquhar, *Outline*, p. 204; Lorenzen, *K. A*, p. 7). Returned into ordinary life, no high-caste Tantric would think of breaking the social taboos. One might even argue that the predilection for contact with low-caste people, especially women, in a ritual environment served to render the high-caste practiser still more conscious of the violent breakthrough of his ordinary situation which he had to make in order to proceed on the way to spiritual emancipation. Seen in this light, the ritual egalitarianism of Tantrism in practice acted as a caste-confirming and class-confirming force. One can compare the confirmatory and stabilizing role of festivals like Holi or Śabarotsava, during which caste or class relations are temporarily eliminated.[19]

There are on the contrary many traces of caste distinction in the Tantric texts. A familiar instance is the classification of people to be qualified for initiation with regard to their social estate (*varṇa*); a Brahman is qualified after a pupilage of one year, a Kṣatriya after two years, etc. (KT 14, 104; cf. also ŚT 2, 153). This can, however, be dismissed as a case of the pure theoretization so popular in Hindu ideology. While many Tantras ordain that a guru — of course among other requirements —

[18] On this courting of the strange and the despised, see also Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, p. 100.

[19] See McKim Marriott, *The Feast of Love*, in: Singer, *Krishna*, p. 212; Kane, *History*, I, p. 177; 304; R. W. Nicholas, *Ritual Hierarchy and Social Relations in Rural Bengal*, in: CIS, 1967, p. 56-83, especially on p. 79. Of interest is also G. Burkhart, *Equal in the Eyes of God*, in: CAS, 5, 1974, p. 1-14. The argumentation by Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 341-346, focuses upon the complementary relation between acceptance of life and renunciation.

should be *kulīna-* "of good family", the author of the PrT (p. 170) explains that the word in this case means *kaula-* "belonging to the Kula or Kaula school", and emphatically condemns those who favour a literal interpretation. But statements like the one in the PM (ch. 1) that both *ācārya* and *sādhaka* should be *agrajanmakulodbhūta-* "sprung from a family of distinguished birth" can hardly be explained away as referring to the Kaula school. There is also a tendency to differentiate the use of *bījas* "kernel formulas" according to the varṇas. The MNT declares (5,62f.) that only Brahmans may pronounce the Gāyatrī preceded by the most sacred Vedic bīja *Oṃ*; the second varṇa should apply *Śrīṃ* instead of *Oṃ* and the third varṇa *Aiṃ*; while the Śūdras, traditionally not entitled to the Veda, should use an adaptation of the Gāyatrī directed to Kālī instead of Savitar. But, at least in recent practice, there are groups of Brahmans who give *Oṃ* to Śūdras and women.

The Samaya school restricted the access to its sādhanā to the twice-born (Lakṣmīdhara and other commentators on SL, vs. 31). It is, however, possible that official claims to high social standing were meant as an apologetical device in order to keep up the respectability of the sect. We might conclude that the views of the Tantric authors in these matters are widely divergent, but that the twice-born descent which can be postulated for the great majority of them clearly reveals itself in regulations like those mentioned above. It needs scarcely to be doubted that the general theoretical standpoint that all men and women have "qualification" (*adhikāra*) to initiation into Tantric ceremonies has been and is mostly brought into practice. A statistical survey of social position among present-day practisers, if possible, would prove instructive.

Another feature worth investigation is the position of women within Śākta Tantrism. Śāktism proclaims the exalted position of woman as an incarnation of the Great Mother. A Śākta is warned in emphatic terms not to despise any woman, while he should consider everything around him as female (SŚT 1, 11, 34; KJN 23, 11; etc.). There are many references to female sādhakas and even gurus (for instance, RYT 2,107ff., quoted by PrT, p. 179); but in the RYT (2, 110) a widow is excluded from guruship (cf. Kane, *History*, p. 1075). The tale of Devī's incarnation in the house of a Brahman in a village near Prayag may be the outcome of the appearance of a famous woman guru (BYT 1, according to Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 102). Lopāmudrā "She who breaks the seal", the legendary wife of the sage Agastya, is the reputed propounder of a certain variety of the Śrīvidyā (G. Kaviraj, *Preface* to the YHT, 2nd ed., p. V.). The chief role of women in the Śākta Tantric cult, however, is to act as female partners (*śakti*, *dūtī*) of the male adepts who desire to realize their unity with the universal

Women

Śakti. Such a human śakti should answer a number of requirements and be initiated (KT 7, 42ff.; KJN 20, 14f.). Low-caste women may develop into very good śaktis because of the smaller number of social restrictions to which they are accustomed. The woman most hampered by such restrictions, the high-caste housewife, is for that very reason often unsuited to act as her husband's religious partner. No wonder that modern practisers often find it difficult to obtain suitable śaktis.

Indeed, Tantrism seems to be inspired by a genuine awe for the female as the seat of reproduction, the source of all life. But it would again be wide of the mark to state that it acted as a liberating force which aimed at the improvement of the social status of women. Woman worship and the partnership of women in the ritual are embedded in a purely religious setting. The social inferiority of woman is even a necessary presupposition for the liberating antinomianism of Tantric sādhanā. The sādhaka is the bee, woman the flower which is left behind when the nectar of siddhi has been gathered (Bose, *Sahajiyā Cult*, p. 76f., referring to the Bengali text Premavilāsa). This is precisely the opposite of Dumont's remark that "woman, made an inferior in ordinary life, takes her revenge in the cult" (Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 345). We may add that incidentally Tantric authors like to extend their love for classification also to womankind (KAN 9,78f., = KT 7, 42f.).

Another aspect which cannot be omitted is that full-time sādhakas are still forced to make a living. The rituals which have to be conducted may cost an amount of money which can be prohibitive for the poorer among the practisers (among modern Tantric circles, in Varanasi at least, the utensils are preferably of silver). Gurus expected some material compensation (*dakṣiṇā*) from their pupils (who should not be devoid of money, KT 13,7), who thereby obtained the opportunity to clear themselves of the spiritual debt incurred. The dakṣiṇās required by some gurus seem to have been substantial (KT 13,108; NT 15,21ff.; 16,112f.; TT 25,43). There are warnings that a client should not try to deceive the executor of a ritual about his real financial means. Modern Tantric institutions are financially supported mainly by contributions of followers who are often well-to-do. Besides, as has already been intimated, many Tantrics performed — and still perform — rites of immediate practical interest to ordinary men and women. A divine status can be claimed and divine power be applied on the practical level. It is without doubt true that the popularity of Tantrism has to a large extent been due to the relative cheapness of such services and the easy accessibility of their performers when compared with the traditional Vedic and Purāṇic ritualisms (Nandi, *Institutions*, p. 115). Innumerable mantras,

yantras, astrological tables and charts, medicinal herbs and other devices came to be applied in this way to serve human needs and desires. Many age-old practices, for instance those of prognostication, have been incorporated. As a rule, the general or specialized applicability (*phala*) is added in the texts to the description of the devices in a manner not unlike modern tactics of advertising (an exemplary case is TT 25,70ff., but instances can be found in abundance). Many rituals which were especially suited for the community as a whole (e.g. those to be executed in time of famine or war) required the sponsorship of kings or other aristocrats. As a matter of fact, one could even speak of a competition of the religious denominations for royal support or influence at the courts (cf. Jhavery, *Mantraśāstra*, p. 232; Lorenzen, *K. K*, p. 45). By means of magical acts like *ākarṣaṇa* "attraction" or *vaśīkaraṇa* "subjugation", persons of royal rank could be brought under control (MVT 19,88, a.o.). With their magical lore systematized into the *ṣaṭkarmāṇi* "Six Acts (of magic)", they were able to present the rulers with interesting means of strengthening their position and of safeguarding the economic productivity of the country (rituals for *śānti* and *puṣṭi*). Of course, Tantric magic was very often executed in the interest of private persons; the texts which specialize in this field even belong to the most popular part of Tantric literature. The Six Acts are most often enumerated as:

1. *Śānti* "pacification", the counteracting of all kinds of danger; this heading includes *puṣṭi*, the promotion of welfare;

2. *Vaśīkaraṇa* "subjugation", bringing others (gods, kings, women) under one's control; this includes *ākarṣaṇa* "attraction", for instance of a woman partner;

3. *Stambhana* "immobilization", i.e. causing the victim (for instance an inimical army) to lose the faculty of moving; also prevention of miscarriage may fall under this heading;

4. *Vidveṣaṇa*, causing two victims to come into conflict with each other;

5. *Uccāṭana*, driving a victim from his home, position or mental equilibrium;

6. *Māraṇa* "liquidation", which may in practice be restricted to *vyādhikaraṇa* "making sick", for instance in case of the victim's timely compliance with the executor's desire; the reverse is called *mṛtyuṃjaya* "conquering death", i.e. curing the sick.

There are many other varieties and the recipes are so manifold that it is clear that under the heading of the Six Acts we find a systematization of the whole of the magical lore (especially herb lore) used by specialists of differing title and status.

Geographical aspects of Tantrism

It has often been argued, and not entirely without justification, that Tantrism was rooted, at least in its earlier phase, in the low castes of India, or outside the Aryan pale, on the outskirts of the Hinduized area. The fact that the Tantric texts written in Sanskrit often reveal the search for systematization, the intellectualism and respectability of the Brahmans, cannot conceal that many features presented as Tantric are survivals from a stock of scarcely Hinduized, sometimes even pre-Aryan semi-primitive religious folklore. The incorporation into the Tantric tradition as an esoteric ritual may represent the final stage of absorption into Hinduism of a primitive cult after an intermediate stage of, say, a vegetation festival (Bolle, *Persistence*, p. 68). The process can be surmised in many cases. Worship of Devī's bodily parts as conducted in the cult centre of Kāmākhyā in Assam and in many other places may have its origin in a primitive worship of natural features of the soil associated with the female breasts or generative organ.[20] The use of alcoholics or drugs and the breaking of taboos in erotic matters seem to have been much in use in early unsophisticated agrarian rituals in India, while many Tantric deities must have begun their career as local godlings. Some traditions of miracle-working may originally have been based upon shamanistic experiences (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 316f.), but it is not advisable to try to explain the ferocious or erotic rituals in general as degradations of what was originally a mental process expressed by means of symbols (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 295). According to Eliade, this mental process itself may in its turn be a "revalorization" of actually conducted primitive rituals which were irreconciliable with Hindu respectability: in the course of Tantric history this revalorization was then again followed by a "devalorization".

On the other hand, there was a retrograde process by which yogins, sannyāsins and other propounders of Tantric cults succeeded in propagating many of their views among the common people. This may account for many Tantric features in popular religion or vernacular literature.

There has also been a keen controversy over the question if and how far Tantrism was due to influences from outside India. The theories of a borrowing of the whole of Tantrism from China, Tibet or the Middle East are usually based upon exaggerated interpretation of standard passages (like RYT, ch. 17, on Vasiṣṭha's journey to Tibet) and can be dismissed. In

[20] Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 8, referring to i.a. the Mbh. as an early source; cf. also Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 294f.

certain cases, however, the possibility of foreign influence should not be ruled out. Without doubt the Himalayan and Vindhyan tribes played a role of some importance as sources of exotic rituals; the same can be said of Tibet, especially in the period of Tibetan military ascendancy in regions to the South of the main Himalayan chain during the seventh cent. A.D. (Majumdar, *Ancient Bengal*, p. 83f.). But in most cases these peoples must have been borrowers as well as providers.[21] Such outlying regions are often mentioned in the texts. The process of formation of Tantric rituals can therefore be reasonably expected to have been localized primarily in those areas of Aryan occupation which possessed a relatively strong element of non-Aryan tradition. There are grounds for the supposition that at least some elements of Tantric worship originated among peoples with a mountain culture in the North-West of India (Uḍḍiyāna or Swat, Gandhāra, or the Kashmir Valley and its surroundings) and afterwards were propagated along the Himalayan foothills towards the East as far as Bengal and Assam (van Kooy, *Worship of the Goddess*, p. 34f.; Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 24); but other authors hold the opposite view and consider Bengal and/or Assam as the cradle of all Śākta and Tantric practices. The real state of affairs must have been too complex to be accounted for by general statements about the "original home of Tantrism". Many currents and counter-currents were active in shaping, transforming and transplanting a great variety of religious phenomena. In early Śaiva Tantras there is, for that matter, a clear preference for the regions of the classical Āryāvarta : the North-Western plains and the Central Ganges area (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 14ff.).

As a rule, the Tantras show a keen interest in religious geography. They know of various kinds of sacred places (*pīṭha, upapīṭha, sandoha, kṣetra, upakṣetra*; KJN 8,22), and pilgrimage to them is commended. Some texts advocate interiorized pilgrimage along the same sacred centres, but localized in the mystic body (an early instance in MVT 19,6f.). Śaivism and Śāktism both have their own places of pilgrimage, although in most of them Śiva and Devī in some form or incarnation are considered to dwell together. A characteristic of a Śākta centre of worship is that the Śakti who is the main resident is accompanied by a more or less shadowy male "Bhairava". This may, however, be due to a later development.

Among the most famous sacred places of Śāktism (*pīṭhas* or "seats") are the

[21] On non-Indian elements, cf. Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 45-60; Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 225f.; Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, ch. 3, p. 58-84 : *India and Tibet in Tantric Literature*; Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 46f.; J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. II, Cambridge 1956, p. 83-139; Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 283-289 (Chinese alchemy); Kane, *History*, V, 2, p. 1033f.

Kāmākhyā shrine near Gauhati in Assam, Kalighat in Calcutta, traditionally also Hinglaj in Baluchistan, and several cult centres along the borders of the Ganges plain like those of Bagalāmukhī in Datia or of Vindhyavāsinī near Mirzapur. The Śākta pīṭhas are recorded by tradition in the form of standard lists. They vary in number from three to 108 (Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*). The lists are highly theoretical; an important centre like that of Vindhyavāsinī is left unmentioned, although it is known to have existed as early as the eighth cent. A.D. The origin of the pīṭhas is generally connected with the legend of Satī (Devī as the "faithful wife") who died out of grief because of an outrage committed against her husband, Śiva. The latter afterwards dispersed her body limb by limb all over India, and the places where the limbs fell (for instance, her generative organ at Kāmākhyā) developed into cult centres (Payne, *Śāktas*, p. 8); a tradition which reminds of the worship of relics in Europe. Much archaeological and literary research has still to be done in order to establish the antiquity and individual history — and, in some cases, even the identity — of these centres. The oldest (theoretical) series of pīṭhas consists of only three names, mostly given as Uḍḍiyāna in the North (in reality, probably some place in the Swat Valley in the North of the present Pakistan), Pūrṇagiri in the South (real location undecided) and Kāmarūpa (Kāmākhyā) in the East. Together, they form a mystic triangle with its point upwards (Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 30). Other sources may differ: the KJN (16,5), for instance, gives Śrīśaila (in Andhra), Mahendra (in Orissa?) and Kāmākhyā. In the Śrīvidyā theory, Uḍḍiyāna is located within the central triangle of the Śrīcakra (KKV 51); an indication of the ever increasing tendency towards interiorization and symbolization of outside realities. If the list consists of four items, most often Jālandhara (real position in the Kashmirian foothills, North of Jullundur) is added to the first triad mentioned above; these four are conveniently identified with other famous quadruples like the four elements, the four stages of evolution of speech or four important mystic centres of the body. In another theory, the four pīṭhas mean different areas of realization of mystical truth : *vidyā, mantra, mudrā, maṇḍala* (Dwiveda, Introd. to the NST, p. 56; Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 111).

After a study of the religious geography of Tantrism, the conclusion should be that Śāktism and Hindu Tantrism, although especially popular in certain regions like Bengal, Assam, the North-West and Kerala, is spread over the whole of the Indian subcontinent. In its Buddhist form, Tantrism exceeded these limits towards Tibet, China and Japan; in both its Buddhist and its Hindu varieties it has been propagated in South East Asia. Within the latter area, the influence of Indian religions was an active force from the

beginning of the Christian era onwards.[22] The tendency to coalescence between the Buddhist and the Hindu traditions in this area resulted in emphasis upon the complementary character of both as alternative ways to release. The predominantly courtly and upper-class character of the Indian religious systems imported into this part of Asia is also characteristic for its Tantric component.

In Burma there are little traces of systematic application of Tantric elements. In Cambodia, the Hindu religious systems flourished for many centuries at the Funan and Khmer courts until they were ousted by Theravāda Buddhism. In 802 A.D., Jayavarman II introduced the Tantra-influenced Devarāja cult as a means of enhancing the prestige of his newly established regime.[23] King Udayādityavarman II (1050-1066 A.D.) praised his predecessor Sūryavarman I for having caused Śaivite religious books (*mantratantrāṇi*) to be promulgated. We do not, however, know anything about their contents, except that they described the worship of Śiva, fire offering and asceticism. For a long period, Śaivism remained in vogue in the Khmer empire. The Chinese official Cheu Ta-kuan in 1295 A.D. noted the existence of Śaiva ascetics and liṅga worshippers; there were women among them (Bhattacharya, *Religions Brahmaniques*, p. 46). Varieties of *dīkṣā* are also mentioned, such as the Mahāmaṇḍaladīkṣā which was supposed to lead to abundant siddhi; the initiate was the king (Bhattacharya, *o.c.*, p. 72). No erotic or fearsome Śiva manifestations have been found in iconographic form; images of Devī were well known, although they are often difficult to identify with exactitude. Reliefs in Banteay Srei show the seven and the eight Mātṛkās (Mothers).[24]

In Indonesia there are various traces of Hindu Tantrism. We refer, however, to another volume of this Handbuch for an adequate treatment of the subject.[25] We can only add that various Tantric elements are well known at present in Hindu Bali. Among them are the six cakras and the Kuṇḍalinī as well as micro-macrocosmic symbolism; books on Tantric subjects are available on the island.

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[22] Coedès, *États Hindouisés*; some more recent data on Indonesia can be found with the help of J. Gonda, *The Presence of Hinduism in Indonesia: Aspects and Problems*, in: *Vivekananda Commemoration Vol.*, Madras 1970, p. 535-554.

[23] See Bhattacharya, *Religions Brahmaniques*, p. 49f.; Coèdes, *États Hindouisés*, p. 171ff.; Bosch, *Dinaja*, p. 271f.; Zoetmulder, *Hochreligionen*, p. 249f.

[24] See J. Boisselier, *Le Cambodge*, Paris 1966, p. 286ff. for Śiva, and 294f. for Devī.

[25] J. Gonda, *The Indian Religions in Pre-Islamic Indonesia and Their Survival in Bali*. In: *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, III. Abteilung, II. Band, Abschnitt 1, p. 1-54, Leiden/Köln 1975, especially on p. 7f., 10, 14-16, 24, 32f., 52. An earlier authoritative survey is that by Zoetmulder, *Hochreligionen*. Some data also in Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta*; Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*; Goudriaan/-Hooykaas, *Stuti & Stava*, p. 240, 354, 371, 424, 481, and Index, s.v. Śakti.

Traditional Classifications of Tantric Schools.[26]

A survey of the history of Tantrism, however succinct, cannot be complete without making mention of the classifications which the authors of the Tantras themselves did make of their tradition. The general term for a "school", *saṃpradāya*, expresses the view that the revelation, which is of divine origin (see above, p. 13), was successively handed down by an unbroken lineage of spiritual authorities. It is usually in this context that the traditional divisions are applied. Sometimes they reflect the particular circumstances of the mythical first stage of the tradition (for instance, a fivefold division came about because the five-headed manifestation of Śiva promulgated the sacred doctrine), in other cases they are based upon purely geographical principles. Their theoretical character is usually obvious, and sometimes they play their part in the mysticism of numbers. This implies that, even if we had knowledge and understanding of all the references to these "schools" — which is by no means the case —, the real state of affairs would still very much escape us. We have to assume that behind these theoretical statements, meant to give an impression of an orderly structure which was in keeping with the secret connective forces in microcosm and macrocosm, there lies hidden a reality of a bewildering complexity. Any teacher could give new interpretations of what his guru had transmitted to him or add new details to it; lineages could become extinct or taken over by adherents of other schools; actually performed rituals could be symbolized and the reversal; schools might quarrel and split on seemingly insignificant details while important changes can be hidden behind a flood of obscure words or have been held back from written tradition altogether. The most annoying source of confusion is the inconsistency in the principles of classification and their consequent overlapping which resulted in an inextricable network. It will therefore be clear to the reader that the following observations have only a very tentative character.

The oldest divisions are probably those found in Śaiva Āgamas. The NT, for instance, (8,57) mentions Dvaita, Advaita, Vimiśra "Mixed", Ekavīra and Yāmala; but elsewhere (9,2) it speaks of Vāma "Left", Dakṣiṇa "Right", Siddhānta "Authoritative Doctrine", Saura "worshippers of Sūrya", Vaiṣṇava and Vaidika "Veda-oriented". This reminds of the six Darśanas or "viewpoints" recognized by the SMT (ch. 5), the ŚST (1,2,85f.) and others: Śākta, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura, Gāṇapa, Bauddha; i.e. the worshippers of the five

[26] Literature: Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 50ff.; Dwiveda, *Introduction* to NST, p. 53; Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 40ff.; Awasthi, *Rahasya*, p. 3ff.

deities recognized by the Smārta brahmans with only the Buddhists added to them. This category of six is in imitation of the classic six Darśanas of Indian philosophy.

In the classification of the NT, different categories are welded together into one system. The terms Vāma and Dakṣiṇa here probably refer to Srotas (see below); Ekavīra most probably refers to the worship of Śiva without a Śakti or attendants; but the term is not wholly clear (Kṣemarāja, commenting upon NT 13,39, connects Ekavīra with the Parātrīśikāmata : cf. Dwiveda, Introduction to NST, p. 52). The word Yāmala "twin" or "pair" suggests the worship of Śiva and Śakti as the complementary aspects of the Supreme Brahman, and therefore a more Śākta orientation (see also above, p. 22). From Kashmir Śaivism we further know the schools called Krama and Kula. Abhinavagupta was initiated into the Krama system, but in a later stage he preferred the Kula initiation. These two traditions differed from each other in the method of worship followed and the variety of yoga which they proclaimed (Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 461 ff.); both could include Śāktas as well as Śaivas among their followers.

Ekavīra

Yāmala

An important principle of classification followed in the Śaiva Tantras is that of Srotas "current". In case three of these are distinguished, they are most often called Dakṣiṇa, Vāma and Siddhānta or Madhyama "Middling". The NT associates the right current with Bhairava or the eight Bhairavas, mythical propounders of the eight Yāmalas and of Kashmir Śaivism. The left current, which seems to have soon lost its importance, is associated with Tumburu, another manifestation of Śiva, and included the Śiraścheda, Sammohana and other Tantras (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 6; Goudriaan, *Tumburu*). The Siddhānta was probably associated with the Śaivāgamas (headed in the lists by the Kāmikāgama). Another (without doubt younger) source considers Śakti to be the deity of the Vāmasrotas and adds a fourth current, Miśra, which comprised the worship of the Seven Mothers (Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi 5,11 quoted by Dwiveda, *o.c.*, p. 53 f.). The terms "right" and "left" seem to refer to the Southern and Northern face of Śiva in his five-faced manifestation; the Siddhānta would then have been uttered by that god's "upper face" (BYT 39; Kṣemarāja on NT 12,1). The Dvaita Śaiva Āgamas themselves seem to prefer a division into five currents each of which came forth from one of Śiva's five mouths (Dwiveda, Introduction to NST, p. 54 f.).

Bhairava

The Śākta Tantras usually hold that the sacred revelation was given in different *Amnāyas* "(subjects of) remembrance"; other terms used are *anvaya* or *samaya*. There are often said to be five of them, also proclaimed by Śiva's mouths. In some texts, six are recognized by the addition of the

Adhara or "Lower" Āmnāya which has been associated with Jaina deities (Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 25f.); and the number seven is also found. The Āmnāya scheme is used for different purposes. It serves to classify not only texts (the KMT, for instance, reckons itself to the Western or Kulālikāmnāya; the KT to the Upper Āmnāya), but also deities, mantras, *bhāvas* "dispositions" of sādhakas, and stages of transmission (PrT, p. 116, quoting "another text"). The Āmnāya classification may have been partly based upon reality, but in general it betrays its artificiality. An accurate study of the relevant sources and their mutual dependencies is still necessary in order to obtain more light on this vexed question (a detailed enumeration and discussion of sources is given in "Āmnāya"). In any case, the Ūrdhva or "Upper" Āmnāya to which the KT ascribes itself and which is highly extolled by this text (3. 1-47) seems to have become the favourite focus of ascription in the Śākta Tantras. It is associated in the first place with the Parāprāsāda (or -prasāda) mantra discussed in the KT (ch. 4), but other mantras are also connected with it (the VidyT, 1, 17ff., lists 64 such mantras). The Parā Tantra associates the Ūrdhvāmnāya with the Śrīvidyā (Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 28; "Āmnāya", p. 30); the Samayācāra Tantra connects it with Kālikā and other goddesses (quotation in the PrT, p. 117). The Īśānasaṃhitā, a Vaiṣṇava work which without any justification ascribes itself to the KT, gives a completely deviating list of six Āmnāyas (Catalogue RASB, VIII, p. 115f.).

Tantric methods of worship, and the texts which describe them, could also be designated by the term *mata* "conviction", "doctrine". Thus, we have the Kubjikāmata and its Tantra; the Piṅgalāmata; the Kālikāmata (according to the SMT, ch. 1, this school worshipped nine Kālikās, among whom Kubjikā) and others (on the Matas recognized by the Kashmirian Jayaratha, see Awasthi, *Rahasya*, p. 19). Most of their followers seem to have been reckoned to the Kaulas. In course of time, the word Mata became especially associated with the division into Kādi- and Hādimata. The opposition of these terms is an intricate and highly theoretical problem. We can distinguish two different principles of classification both lying in the mantra sphere:

a. The interpretation of the "letters" (in reality: the first syllables) of bījas. This is a very important question because letters are phonic manifestations of deities. In the Hādi view, *ha* = Devī, and *a* = Śiva. In the Kādi interpretation, *ha* = Śiva (and Saṃhāra, destruction of the delusion of existence), while *ka*, the first of the consonants, = Devī (and creation). The latter theory suits the worship of Kālī with the bīja *krīṃ*. Both interpretations are possible within both the Kaula and the Samaya schools (for which see below). The matter is complicated further by the existence of a third group called

Kahādi which seems to represent the view (supported by the KT) that the supreme deity is an indissoluble unity of Śiva and Śakti; the most important bīja in this case is *hsauḥ* or *haṃsa*, in which *ha* = Śiva and *sa* = Devī.

b. Two methods of division and interpretation of the Śrīvidyā. In this case, Kādi is associated with god Kāma as its Ṛṣi, Hādi with Lopāmudrā. This looks like a younger and specialized development of a). A complication is that both groups are subdivided into Śākta and Śāmbhava (Śaiva) variants. On a certain moment, the Kādi view seems to have gained the upper hand. It is exclusively followed by the TT (also called "Kādimata" itself) and Bhāskararāya, while the YHT still advocated both views (and the Hādimata was indeed followed by its commentator Amṛtānanda).

There is also a geographical principle of classification. The SMT (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 99), referring to Sampradāyas or Mārgas "ways", locates the Gauḍa "Bengali" in the East, the Kerala in the South, the Kāśmīra in the West, and the Vilāsa "enjoyment" everywhere, while the North remains unoccupied. On another place in the SMT, the first-mentioned three, together with Cīna, Drāviḍa and Jaina, constitute a group of six. In later texts, this pseudo-geographical principle is applied in a purely theoretical, often highly casuistic manner. The ŚST connects the Gauḍa, Kāśmīra and Kerala traditions with the worship of the three main forms of Devī recognized by that text: Kālī, Tārā and Tripurā, complicating the matter by introducing the Hādi-Kādi division (1,5,24ff.):

	Kerala	*Gauḍa*	*Kāśmīra*
According to Hādi	Kālikā	Tārā	Tripurā
According to Kādi	Tripurā	Kālī	Tāraṇī

The variation in nomenclature (Kālī-Kālikā etc.) is an almost universal feature in Tantric literature. The ŚST further contradicts itself (in 1,6,125f.) by connecting Hādi with Tripurā, Kahādi with Tārā and Kādi with Kālī (while elsewhere, like in the VidyT, Kādimata is opposed to Kālīmata). This instance has been presented here in order to show the intricacy and mutual overlapping of the methods of classification which have been applied in some Tantric texts. Nevertheless, the division into Kāśmīra etc. is still known among present-day Tantrics. In the North of India, the Kashmir and the Gauḍa tradition exist; it is, however, unclear in how far they correspond to the criteria applied to them in the texts (cf. p. 122).

Another division is that into three Krāntās "Steps"; it also follows the geographical principle. The Viṣṇukrāntā stretches from the Vindhyas to

Chittagong at the Eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal; the Aśvakrāntā from the Vindhyas to Tibet; the Rathakrāntā from the Vindhyas southward and across the ocean towards South East Asia (Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 46f., referring to Avalon). But a different explanation is also found (Ghosh, *Spirit and Culture*, p. 242, referring to the Śaktimaṅgala Tantra). The importance of this relatively recent system is limited.

The division which is perhaps best known outside Tantric circles is that into Vāma "Left" and Dakṣiṇa "Right". These terms do not refer to "schools", but to "methods" or "ways of conduct" (*ācāra*); and they may again cut straightly through differences of sect or school. Modern Śāktas often object to this division because Vāma in the mainstream of Indian puritanism suggests something indecent or "revolting". If pressed, however, they would — at least in Bengal — consider themselves to follow Vāmācāra while claiming the ritual purity of their sect. Although these terms were known to the older Śaiva Tantrics in connection with the mouths of Śiva or "currents" (see above), this method of classification seems to have come in vogue in the Śākta Tantra because of the activity of a Brahmanical reform movement (in the South ?) in the later Middle Ages. These respectable Śāktas styled their system the Dakṣiṇācāra or Samayācāra; its protagonist, Lakṣmīdhara (sixteenth cent.) strongly condemned the ritual practices of the Vāmācārins which he regarded as un-Vedic and unworthy. The Samayācārins developed a highly intellectual method of purely internal worship of their Śakti, Tripurā, in her Śrīcakra form. They abhorred the use of wine and other unconventional ritual items. The term Vāmācāra (or Vāmamārga) became established for the time-honoured Śākta use of wine and meat, and perhaps also other antinomian elements in their ritual. The KālPur distinguishes the "left" method from "ordinary" worship; according to this text, also the deities can assume a "left" manifestation in order to enjoy wine and meat (van Kooy, *Worship of the Goddess*, p. 28-30). If questioned about the nature of the left method, modern Śākta practisers might also point to an assumed connection with *vāmā* "woman" and lay stress upon worship of the female element which is ordained as a general principle. During pūjā, the ritual utensils are also put down on their proper places in an order from left to right. Besides, Dakṣiṇa and Vāma occur in a Kaula classification of ritual conduct into seven : Veda, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Dakṣiṇa, Vāma, Siddhānta and Kaula. The series is comprehensively climactic : the Vedic method is the first preparatory stage, and so on (KT 2,7f.; Carlstedt, *Till Kulas Lov*, p. 17f.; Ghosh, *Spirit and Culture*, p. 243). The rationale of this particular sequence is not completely clear, and its function is probably mainly theoretical.

Samayācāra

The antithesis Vāma-Dakṣiṇa is covered also, and still more specifically, by the terms Samaya and Kaula. Samaya "Convention" has several meanings, but in the present context Samayācāra, as we saw, means the practice of internal worship as advocated by Lakṣmīdhara and his followers while the Kaulas (according to the Samayins) conduct external worship including revolting acts, while contenting themselves with worshipping the internal Kuṇḍalinī only in the Mūlādhāra, the lowest cakra (Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya*, p. 42; 45f.). Not all Samayins lived up to this distinction (Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 56). This opposition mainly obtains in Tripurā worship; in practice, every Samayin seems to be a Tripurā worshipper, but this can by no means be said of every Kaula. Indeed, the term Kaula largely transcends the opposition to Samaya. Within the Kaula school, *samaya* may have quite another meaning, as for instance when the KT (11,99f.) asserts that one becomes a Kaulika only when being aware of the Samayas, i.e. the secret meanings of mantras and details of conduct.

The Sanskrit word *kaula* is derived from *kula* "(joint) family". In the Tantric environment, *kula* can have many shades of meaning which are apt to completely bewilder a student of Western background.[27] As a school or sect, Kula includes those who (as Kaulas) consider themselves to belong to the "family" of the Śakti — and have been admitted into it by initiation —, that is the Śakti herself and all her manifestations which mystically encompass the Whole of creation. Only the transcendental Śiva (who is *akula*) exceeds it. On the plane of internal worship, kula is the Śakti as Kuṇḍalinī who moves upwards and strives after the unification with the Supreme Śiva in the Brahmarandhra (see below, p. 171; this union is also called kula by some authorities). It is sometimes said that real Kaulas are only those who have realized this union (*Editorial*, in the periodical Kaul-yuga, I, 1, 1972, p. 23; Puṇya Sheel Sharma, in: the same, p. 15). The kaula method is said to involve the five Makāras; those Śāktas who follow only three Makāras are not Kaulas. The Kaula school is without doubt the most important — and certainly the most characteristic — movement within Tantrism. Not only Śāktas, but also Śaivas and others may claim to be Kaulas. We have, for instance, the Śaiva Kaula tradition of Kashmir, to which Abhinavagupta belonged. It is not exactly clear from his writings what he understood by the Kula method. In any case, it involved a secret (*rahasya*) ritual besides the preparatory Śaiva ritual which was *bāhya*, i.e. not hidden from the

KAULA
KULA

[27] Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 594ff., enumerates — not too systematically — 23 meanings. Carlstedt, *Studier i KT*, Uppsala 1974, distinguishes ten basic meanings. In our opinion, at least 24 "meanings" can be listed from Tantric literature.

public. Abhinavagupta traced the origin of the Kula tradition to Macchanda. This legendary figure is probably identical with Matsyendra(nātha) who, however, is considered by the KJN to be the founder of one particular subsect, the Yoginīkaula (Bagchi, *Introduction* to the KJN, p. 35; cf. Padoux, *Parole*, p. 58). Various subsects are mentioned in the KJN and other texts, but these classifications are not particularly relevant here (cf. also Dwiveda, Introduction to the NST, p. 60f.).

It seems that the Kaula sect has made great advance during the course of the centuries and succeeded in ousting several other traditions. In principle, the Kula method of worship is divided into three according to the manifestation of the Śakti which is accepted as supreme : Śrī or Tripurā, Kālī and Tārā. In Bengal, the difference between Kālī and Tārā has become obliterated and Kālī is the main deity; she is also popular in Kerala. The one division which is at present of particular relevance among the Śākta Tantric practisers of the Kashmir tradition (which is the most widespread at the moment) is that into the Śrīkula and the Kālīkula. The former mainly concentrates upon the benign and lovely aspect of the goddess; the latter upon her frightening manifestation. The worship of Śrī was the first to be systematized and offers the most evolved symbolism; the main reason why it has been chosen for a detailed description in Chapter V of this book. The guru can choose one of both alternatives in accordance with the psychical disposition of the devotee who is to be initiated by him; but the sādhanā of the Kālīkula is at present very difficult to be followed with success for a householder because of the eccentric ritual which it involves.

Among the Kaulas, one can also distinguish the "pure" Śākta view from that which is oriented towards the Supreme Being conceived as the union of Śiva and Śakti (Ardhanārīśvara). The latter standpoint is held by the KT (cf. KT 16,26) as well as the KJN; the Akulavīra Tantra distinguishes the Kṛtakas "artificials" who cling to dualism and the Sahajas "naturals" who are superior (Bagchi, *Introduction* to the KJN, p. 36).

CHAPTER TWO

THE PLACE OF TANTRISM IN HINDU RELIGIOUS SPECULATION

Generalities

Taking into account the diversity of Tantric schools, one will not be surprised by the existence of many different, even mutually contradicting features in "Tantric" thought. Moreover, it should be said at the outset that the Tantras did not in the first place concentrate on developing new lines of thought (Dasgupta, *Tantric Buddhism*, p. 1; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens*, II, p. 30). Truths common to Hinduism are often repeated in them. Since Tantrism is essentially a *sādhanā*, a practical path to liberation of body and soul, a "shortcut to redemption" (Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, p. 31; cf. Rāmeśvara, comm. on PKS, Introd., p. 1), there is some plausibility in the statement that "metaphysical subtleties" have been "superimposed" upon an original fund of practical yogic and mantric methods (Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 296). But it should not be lost sight of that those who tried to mould (and account for) Tantric practice by connecting with it a view of the world and a speculative background were the indispensable architects of the many-sided structure of what we know as "Tantrism" today.

Here again, an important question is that of terminology. Is, for instance, the Kashmir Śaivite philosophy, especially the Trika system which culminated in Abhinavagupta's writings, to be considered as "Tantric"? It is, in so far as it was the product of thinkers who were initiated into Tantric esoteric schools. Yet it can better be presented in a survey of medieval theist speculative thinking, and in the following pages we shall only refer to those elements of it which bear directly upon those subjects which usually play the foremost role in the Tantras themselves, especially the nature of Śakti and the road to redemption.

Beside the Kashmirians, the most consistent contribution to Tantric thought came from the learned expounders of Śrīvidyā such as Amṛtānanda, Puṇyānanda and Bhāskararāya. The Tantras themselves do not, in general, present us with a coherent body of speculation. Tantric authors by the multiplicity of their approach often deal with speculative matters in such a way that in our eyes they necessarily seem to be inconsistent. A detailed monograph on the subject classifying and ordering the source material has still to be written. In this chapter we shall only mention some essentials.

The general metaphysical principles followed by Śaiva Tantric schools seem to have included monism (*advaita*), monism-cum-dualism (*vimiśra* or *dvaitādvaita*) and dualism (*dvaita*; NT 16,23; 8,56f.; Jayaratha on TĀ 1, 35; Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 138ff.; Kaviraj, *Digdarśan*, p. 55). The Dvaita school seems to have been the oldest (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 57). With the growing predominance of the Śākta outlook within the Tantric tradition, the Advaita standpoint obtained more and more emphasis. Śākta authors often profess their monistic world view (KJN 11,2-21; AT, Ms. A, 39; TrTU 5, 1f; Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 74, 158f.). There are, however, important differences between Śākta Advaita and the best known variety of Indian monism propounded by Śaṅkara; this has led to the characterization of the former as Śaktivāda and of the latter as Māyāvāda (Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 679; also on p. 59, 342ff.). Others call the Śākta system *sarūpādvaitavāda* "concrete monism" (Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 39). It is also contended that the Tantric world view is elevated above both Dvaita and Advaita (KT 1,111). In the Tantric view, the Advaita standpoint is, moreover, inseparable from the practical yogic course to liberation (*sādhanā*), because the adept's own body is the principal means of realizing (in the full sense of the term) metaphysical truth. The doctrine is, in Tantrism even more than in other Hindu religious movements, inseparable from practice.

A general review of philosophical influences on the Tantrics might be formulated thus: the Śāktas, especially in North India, but also the Śrīvidyā adherents, in their metaphysical outlook adhere to a monism not essentially different from that of Kashmir Śaivism. The statement that the Tantric Kula system formed the base of Abhinavagupta's Trika philosophy cannot be proved (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 59). In any case, that great scholar wrote his Tantrāloka from the standpoint of the Kaula school, while he accords a secondary position to the —equally Tantric — Krama school (on this school, cf. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 165ff. and 461f.; L. Silburn, Introd. to the MM, p. 16ff.). The Trika was certainly influenced by the philosophy of language including alphabet mysticism, and perhaps also a great deal by Pāñcarātra[1] — a school which later largely hides behind Viśiṣṭādvaita. The Southern Śaiva schools follow the non-monistic Śaiva Siddhānta or related doctrines (Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism etc.*, p. 121-127; Dasgupta, *Philosophy*, vol. V, 1955). But the early Śaiva speculations — some-

[1] Padoux, *Parole*, p. 56, 59f., 113n., notes elements of doctrine from the Āhirbudhnya S. and other Vaiṣṇava texts in Trika; Abhinavagupta's PMS is a recast of a Vaiṣṇava work of the same title ascribed to the cosmic serpent Śeṣa; Kṣemarāja in his comm. on NT 13 refers to the Jayasaṃhitā, perhaps the Pāñcarātra work Jayākhya S.

times incorrectly also called Śaiva Siddhānta — found in Indonesian texts, seem to be monistic in outlook (Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta*, p. 53; Goudriaan, *Balinese Religion*, p. 122f.).

Tantric speculation is also directly indebted to the early Upaniṣads (Chāndogya, Maitrī and others; cf. Padoux, *Parole*, p. 38f.) and to the Mīmāṃsā (Veda exegesis; cf. Padoux, p. 54). Of special importance is the influence of the Sāṃkhya, mainly on three points: 1. The Tantric two highest categories of Śiva and Śakti cannot fail to recall the Sāṃkhya basic principles of Puruṣa and Prakṛti; there is also some similarity in their functions and relation to each other, but a most important difference is the non-identity of the two in Sāṃkhya as against the transcendental unity of Śiva and Śakti usually held by Śākta and Śaiva philosophy.[2] 2. The Sāṃkhya evolutionary series of 25 categories: Puruṣa — Prakṛti — Buddhi — Ahaṃkāra — Manas — the ten senses — the ten subtle and gross elements, often recurs in the Tantras and is, for instance, still clearly recognizable in the Śrīcakra system (see below, p. 114f.) with the notable absence of Puruṣa. According to the NTS, Śiva taught Devī first the Vedānta, then the Sāṃkhya series of 25 principles, and at last the Śiva Tantra (Bagchi, *Evolution*, p. 212). 3. The Sāṃkhya doctrine of the relation between cause and effect as one of transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*; Frauwallner, *Geschichte*, I, p. 386) is handled by Śākta authors to prove their doctrine of the reality of the objective world (KKV 28; Woodroffe).

Beside these philosophical influences, one should not neglect the considerable emphasis laid on *bhakti* ("devotion", "reciprocal love") in many Tantric sources (TT 26, 49-53; Rāmeśvara, comm. on PKS 1, 6); the foremost recipient of bhakti is, however, the guru (see below, p. 74f.).

Nature of God

As has been remarked above, the Advaita Śaivas and the Śāktas generally follow the philosophical postulates developed by the Trika authors. God, Who is the Upaniṣadic Brahman, as the supreme principle is *sat* (existent), *cit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss) (Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 52). The Śākta texts (e.g., PKS 1,12) tend to emphasize the ānanda aspect. The ultimate

[2] Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 207f. (too much stressed). Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata*, p. 360ff. is much too rash in identifying the metaphysical positions of Tantrism and Sāṃkhya. An original identity of the Tantric world view with the materialism of the Lokāyatas, held by the same author, is unprovable. Chattopadhyaya's views are shared by Bhattacharyya, *Śākta Religion*, p. 17. — On this problem, see also the discussion between Dumont and Biardeau referred to by Dumont, *Homo hierarchicus*, p. 345.

character of God is presented by a set of paradoxical qualities put in pairs together with a statement of transcendence of these. The supreme Godhead is further designated by conventional epithets such as "beginningless" (*anādi-*), "formless" (*arūpa-*), "immovable" (*acala-*), "complete" (*pūrṇa-* or "independent" (*svatantra-*). Special emphasis is given to God's supreme nature of *prakāśa-* "luminosity", as a rule in a polar relation to *vimarśa-* "reflection". In many epithets, the terminology is Vedāntic, but the Tantras often use well-known expressions in deviating meanings. A case in point is the passage in the RYT (25, 32ff.), where a discourse on "the knowledge of Brahman" turns out to deal with *prāṇāyāma* "regulation of breath" and with mystical centres in the body; elsewhere (RYT 1,136), "the practice of advaita" is identical with *vīrabhāva* (on which, see below, p. 72f.). There is a marked tendency to concretize speculative truths and to locate them in present and tangible realities; thus, the ŚST (2,5,11) defines heaven as the bliss created by beholding a female partner.

The Ultimate is conceived as Paramaśiva by the Śaivas and as the female Mahāśakti by the Śāktas (Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 77), but the term Śūnya "the Void" is also in vogue (VBT 44f., 58; and elsewhere); it designates the absence of any limitative characteristic. The Kaula school followed by Abhinavagupta had a predilection for Anuttaram "the Supreme" (Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 635ff. records 16 meanings of this term in Kaula philosophy).

Manifestations of the Divine

The Ultimate possesses — by means of Its Śakti — the faculty of self-consciousness and spontaneous and self-conditioning manifestation. It can be conceived of as *sakala* "divisible" as well as its counterpart *niṣkala*, and as *saguṇa* "with attributes or qualities" as well as *nirguṇa* (ŚT 1,6; ŚST 1,1,91f.); it exists in the state of *abodha* "absence of illumination" as well as of *bodha* "illumination". There are three "forms" (*rūpa-*) or grades of manifestation: supreme (*para-*), subtle (*sūkṣma-*) and gross (*sthūla-*) — a very popular method of tripartition applied in different situations. The gross form is concrete, like an image; the subtle form is the mantra form; the supreme form is accessible only to the adept through meditation. Successive stages of manifestation are symbolized by divine names and forms; thus — in a Śaiva context — Paramaśiva, Sadāśiva, Īśvara etc. This seeming diversity is accounted for on the theistical and mythological plane by saying that God enters into different manifestations in order to grant different kinds of boons to different types of worshippers (NT 9,7ff.). According to the KT

(6,72f.). Brahman, out of benevolence towards those who strive after redemption, manifests Itself in ten different recipients: liṅga, altar, fire, etc. God is to be approached in visible form just as milk, which, though present in the entire cow, becomes visible through the teats only. In another context, the aim is simply to fight the demons (MNT 4,15; Mahiṣamardinī and other forms of the Goddess). The Śaiva concept of God's five functions (*pañcakṛtya-*) is maintained; they are executed by lower manifestations of the Supreme including the Trimūrti: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. For Devī, the five functions are mentioned in various texts (SL 24; KPS 12; cf. LT, ch. 12, Gupta, p. XXVI). The commentator on the KKV (vs. 1) remarks that the three functions of creation, preservation and destruction of the world mentioned in the KKV also presuppose the two other functions of limitation or obstruction (*nirodha*) and grace (*anugraha*). It is, however, also said that the Śakti performs the activities of the Trimūrti in accordance with Her Husband's will (MNT 4,23ff.; cf. Sharma, Śakti Cult, p. 153).

The Vedāntic doctrine of the identity of the Self with the Absolute is regularly repeated in Tantric sources (e.g., RYT 26,41; cf. Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 50 and 89; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens II*, p. 29f.). The Self (*ātman*) is no other than Brahman (also called Paramātman) who has become subject to limitation (KT 9,43; ŚST 1,1,117ff.). This can also be expressed in this way that the individual soul (*jīva*) is identical with the Divinity (Śiva or Devī; KJN 6,4ff.; PKS 1,5; ŚST 1,11,41f.). This jīva should be meditated upon as present in the lotus of the heart with eight petals (Dhyānabindu Up., prose after 93). In Kuṇḍalinīyoga, the jīva ascends along the Suṣumṇā as the Haṃsa "goose" (KJN 17,18ff.; JT 21,12f.). The word *haṃsa* is pronounced unvoluntarily and inaudibly by human breathing. In reversed form it is pronounced *so 'ham* "He I (am)"; recitation of this "Ajapāmantra" is often prescribed as a form of worship of the Supreme (KT 9,41).

Emanation

In agreement with the Āgamic view of the reality of the objective world, creation is conceived of as a process of emanation or real self-manifestation of the Absolute; or as a "reflection" (*ābhāsa*). By this process the Absolute remains completely unaffected, like fire from which fire has been taken. In Pāñcarātra, this faculty of unaffectedness is called *vīrya* (LT 4,16). The emanatory process is often described as a gradual development from pure (*śuddha*) to impure or, as we saw, as a condensation from subtle to gross, usually expressed by means of the triad *para-sūkṣma-sthūla* or *para-parāpara-apara*. The chief difference of Tantric Advaita with that expounded by Śaṅkara is the

reality of the world as against Śaṅkara's doctrine of pseudo-evolution (*vivarta*).[3] The creative process is, in the Tantric view, a transformation (*pariṇāma*) which is readjusted at the end of a cosmic period when the Śakti reabsorbs or retracts the universe like a tortoise its paws. In the view of Bhāskararāya (VVR 5), the transformation is realized in the guise of a fourfold creation: of categories (*artha*, explained as *tattva*, see below), sound, orbit (*cakra*, i.e. *śrīcakra* and yogic body), and body. The Śākta upholders of Pariṇāma argue that also Śaṅkara, whom they consider as their foremost adherent, admitted its value in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras (2,1,14; cf. R. Krishnaswami Sastri, Introd. to VVR, p. XXIX).

The emanative process finds place by a successive unfolding of the categories of existence (*tattva*), thirty-six of which are generally admitted in agreement with the Trika system. They are enumerated by Abhinavagupta in his TĀ as: Śiva — Śakti — Sadāśiva — Īśvara — Śuddhavidyā "pure wisdom" — Māyā — Kalā (principle of particularization) — Vidyā (individualized wisdom) — Rāga (principle of involvement) — Kāla (time) — Niyati (conditionality) — and the twenty-five Sāṃkhya categories of Puruṣa — Prakṛti — Buddhi — Ahaṃkāra — Manas — the ten senses — the ten subtle and gross elements. Of this list, the first five correspond to stages of Pure Creation. Besides, the Śaiva Kula school admits Bhairava or Anuttaram as the the ultimate transcendent (*tattvātīta-*) entity, sometimes regarded as the thirty-seventh Tattva. Śākta Kula sources, however, stick to the number 36; the lists may differ in details (KT 7,65f.; 13,90; PKS 1,4 and comm.; VVR 36).

A somewhat different course of emanation is described in the ŚT (1,17ff.): from Śiva in the form of a Bindu (see below) originated in due order Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, each with his special function, while from the primordial Unmanifest (*avyakta*, corresponding with the Sāṃkhya *prakṛti*) came Buddhi, Ahaṃkāra and the other categories. It is unclear whether or not this avyakta was conceived as a *causa materialis* separate from the Lord. The commentator, Rāghavabhaṭṭa, hesitates between an identification with the Bindu form (presumably of Śiva) or with the Śabdabrahman which is the Supreme Śakti. In any case this series, characterized by the inclusion of the Trimūrti, continued to play an important role especially in the speculation on the phonic manifestation of the Absolute.[4]

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[3] On this concept see P. Hacker, *Vivarta. Studien zur Geschichte der illusionistischen Kosmologie und Erkenntnistheorie der Inder*, Mainz 1953.

[4] The same series occurs in somewhat augmented form in the doctrine of the Seven Deities equated with the seven particles of the syllable *Oṃ* expounded in the Indonesian

No less than seventy categories were admitted by the Krama system of Kashmir while also the number 94 seems to have been known (Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 526ff.). The ŚST (1,1,112ff.) returns to the Sāṃkhya system in so far that it holds that Prakṛti was evolved immediately from Parabrahman. The Pāñcarātra doctrine of the six "unfoldings" (*vyūha*) of the Lord may have exercised some influence upon the doctrine of the Samaya school that Devī represents herself in nine Vyūhas (nine being a favourite number which e.g. also occurs in the Śrīcakra): Kāla, Kula, Nāma, Jnāna, Citta, Nāda, Bindu, Kalā, Jīva (Lakṣmīdhara, comm. on SL 34).

According to the ŚT (1, 18), which follows a Sāṃkhya doctrine, the psychical system is divisible into three orders: Taijasa "fiery" (the mind), Vaikārika "evolved" (the organs of sense) and Bhūtādi, the gross or subtle elements (Frauwallner, *Geschichte*, I, p. 354). The five elements earth, water, fire, air and space-substance each possess their colour and geometrical form; they correspond to a particle (*kalā*) of Śiva (ŚT 1,21ff.).

The cause of bondage; view of the world

The process described above is due to the spontaneous free will (*līlā*) of the Divine. Also in Śākta texts, this līlā may be ascribed to Śiva who continues to be admitted as the Absolute behind Śakti (KKV 1). From the viewpoint of the individual soul, however, the chief cause of its bondage in the objective world is — in Tantric like in Hindu thought in general — the Māyā, usually considered to be an aspect of the God(dess)'s eternal Śakti. It finds a place, as we saw, in the traditional series of categories. The Māyā is that power by and with which the Supreme Being veils itself (Paramārthasāra 1,15; cf. Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 58) so that the jīva, enveloped by ignorance about its true cosmic nature, falls into the state of an individual subject with a limited knowledge. This means that the nature of Māyā is twofold: limitative and dispersive. Its incomprehensibility is like that of an act of magic or jugglery. The Māyic process is, however, quite real from a metaphysical standpoint. The world, as God's own experience, cannot be illusory (Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 272ff. and elsewhere; Bolle, *Elements*, p. 128ff.). In the Kashmir tradition — also on this point often followed by the Tantras — Māyā is one of the three "bonds" (*pāśa-*) or "stains" (*mala-*): Āṇava "the atom-like", the eternal basic cause of bondage, Karman and Māyā (*pāśa*: SvT 3,175; NT 16,61; *mala*: NT 19,145; KT 13,83). Māyā is also one of the six Kañcukas ("mails" or "covers") which consist,

Jñānasiddhānta and Saptoṃkāramantra; cf. Soebadio, *Introd.* to JSid, p. 24f.; Goudriaan/Hooykaas, *Stuti and Stava*, p. 77.

according to Abhinavagupta, of the Tattvas six to eleven included (Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 307). The six Kośas in Pāñcarātra are a different series, although Māyā features also here (Gupta, *Introd.* to LT, p. XXVIII; cf. also Oberhammer, *Yāmuna*, p. 21, n. 24). The world process itself is, as usual, called *saṃsāra* "perennial movement" (NT 19,145ff.).

The common Tantric description of the world does not differ much from that of Purāṇic Hinduism. The earth is surrounded by the seven oceans and the other continents; above it lie the seven heavens, below are the nether worlds and hells.[5] The ŚST (1,2,4ff.) is one of the interesting sources on the subject. Its author assumes an innumerable number of cosmic systems (*brahmāṇḍa*). Their government is divided between the three main manifestations of Devī: Tārā or Nīlasarasvatī, Sundarī and Kālī. The "globe of Brahman" is spread like a sunshade over the earth which is described as a vase resting on a Śrīcakra. The measurements of time which follow in the text are of the conventional type, but the subsequent treatment of geography is certainly interesting through written in a much drawn-out style. The TT (ch. 28) assumes that the earth is spread over a distance of more than five thousand yojanas (nearly 50.000 miles) around a golden Mount Meru which serves as the throne of Lalitā (Tripurasundarī). The cosmos is surrounded by the "orbit of time" (*kālacakra*). It moves clockwise and is set into motion by the Icchāśakti (see below). It comprises also the planets (*graha*) as well as stars and constellations (*nakṣatra*); the whole system thus seems to have been conceived of as revolving around the sovereign Lady.

Polarity; the Śakti

The notion of the bipolar structure of the Ultimate is one of the keystones of Tantric speculation. This bipolarity is discernible in various ways, the most important of which on the cosmic plane are the pairs Prakāśa-Vimarśa (see above) in its metaphysical, and Śiva-Śakti in its theistic aspect. In the physical world, it is present as the pair Agni-Soma: "fire-water" or male and female reproductive principles (known already in the Veda);[6]

[5] On traditional Hindu cosmography, see W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, Bonn/Leipzig 1920, repr. Hildesheim 1967.

[6] Cf. Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 77; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 98; Pensa, *Considerazione*. — Dasgupta, *Tantric Buddhism*, p. 98ff. and Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, p. 18f. and 199ff. concentrate mainly on Buddhist Tantrism. — A list of polar ideas reproducing the Śiva — Śakti relation in the KT (3,87ff.) includes sun — glow, night — day, *puruṣa* — *prakṛti*, deliverance — enjoyment, word — meaning. See also Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 61ff., who adds, among others, sun — moon, Piṅgalā — Iḍā, heaven — earth (list from the AT).

in the world of sound, as vowels and consonants (MVT 3,11 f.; ŚT 2,5; JT 1,6; see also below, ch. IV), which tend to be represented by the *a* and the *h* respectively (VVR 69). The most effective manifestation of this truth is that of man and woman; that is why creating the universe is comparable to a prolonged and varied sexual act (Amṛtānanda on YHT 1,6 and 2,19; VVR 69). The same principle is covered by the Ardhanārīśvara (half man-half woman) form of Śiva in iconography. On the other hand, the relation between the sexes in ordinary existence represents the cosmic polarity (ŚST 2,59,2; KT 3,91; 8,108).

The notion of Śakti is known to all Tantric authors, although with differences in content and emphasis.[7] The Śakti is beginningless, her form is incomparable and consists of pure bliss; she is the spotless mirror by which Śiva becomes conscious of himself; at the same time she contains the material universe in primordial shape (KKV 2). She is, however, also the efficient cause of emanation as well as its spiritual base; in the latter function she is equated with pure "consciousness" (*cit*, *caitanya*, *saṃvid*; Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 240ff.; 279). She can be addressed by the devotees as Divine Mother, loving though limitless (Bose/Haldar, *Tantric Philosophy*, p. 71), but she can also be represented by symbols (Mookerjee, *Tantra Art*, Plates 45 and 58; for the triangle, see below). Her secret nature is also said to incorporate the transcendent unity of the two poles of existence. This is expressed by means of an identity with the word *ahaṃ*: the combination of *a* (Śiva) and *ha*, sealed by *aṃ*, the Bindu, symbolizing transcendence (cf. KKV 3 and 5; TT, ch. 1 and Avalon, Analysis, p. 17; Amṛtānanda on YHT 2,21-25; other interpretations exist). One should not confound this mystic *ahaṃ* with the ordinary Sanskrit word meaning "I".

The above interpretation testifies to the fact that the Śakti is sometimes considered to be tantamount to Brahman. The world is not only permeated by her (DBPur 6,28,24; JT 10,3) but also a manifestation of her, i.e. identical with her (cf. NT 16,83; KKV 3; W. N. Brown, Introd. to SL, p. 13). In the consequent Śākta view, everything in the world is "of female form" (*strīrūpa-*, ŚST 1,3,143). It is often emphasized that Śakti is the active partner in the cosmic act of procreation, while Śiva remains purely passive and would be unable even to move without her impulse (SL 1; ŚST 1,1,33ff.). This motif of the active female and the passive male, well-known in Hindu culture, perhaps owes its origin partly to a similar juridical (and economical?)

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[7] On Śakti, cf. Dwiveda, Introd. to NST, p. 83ff.; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 47; Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 51; Kane, *History*, V, 2, p. 1041ff.; Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, p. 200ff.; Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 669ff.

position of the male in primitive matriarchal cultures.[8] In iconography it is reflected in the famous representations of Kālī (fierce aspect of the Mother Goddess) dancing or sitting on Śiva's immovable body (Mookerjee, *Tantra Art*, pl. 73; KPS 18). But the authorities are still more unanimous in saying that Śiva and Śakti together form an indivisible unity, like fire and smoke, fire and heat, tree and shadow or milk and whiteness (KJN 17,8f.; NT 19,157f.; etc.). Devī is also said to be Śiva's body, while both are each other's ātman (SL 34). Thus, creation is only possible by their mutual cooperation. In this process, the chief place is allotted to Śiva by the Kashmir Śaiva texts. But in Tantrism very often no precedence is given to one of the two; they just unite and the female gives birth (NST 4,6; VVR 4; Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 76f.).

Aspects of the Śakti

The Supreme (Parā) Śakti is usually said to be active in three manifestations. In the older Śaiva Tantras these are sometimes described as Aghorā "non-terrible", Ghora(ghora)tarā "intensely terrible" and Ghorā "terrible"; these names, abstracted from a Vedic mantra (TaiĀ 10,47), are also used for groups of Śaktis. In the MVT (3,30-33) the scheme is as follows:

Group of Śaktis	*Metaphysical gradation*	*Function*
Ghoratarā	Apara	causes to fall
Ghorā	Parāpara	creates attachment
Aghorā	Para	grants liberation

In the NT (19,159f.), however, Aghorā is equated with Icchā "will, desire", the second with Kriyā "action" and Ghorā with Jñāna "wisdom". This view is independent of that expounded in the MVT, because it implies differences in function. Icchā is most often associated with creation (or "fall"), Kriyā with preservation (or "attachment"), and Jñāna(śakti) with destruction (or "liberation") — but they are also connected with other triads of functions (Dwiveda, Introd. to NST, p. 75 and 78). The triad Icchā etc. remains the most popular division of Śakti in Tantric literature, but there are also fourfold and fivefold representations (NT 11,25f. comm.; Goudriaan, *Tumburu*, p. 78 and 86; Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 278, 461 a.o.), while the sixteen-

[8] Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 232ff.; N. N. Bhattacharyya, in Sircar, *Śakti Cult*, p. 65ff., referring to the material collected by O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, Hyderabad 1941, p. 18-35.

fold division into Nityā "eternal" goddesses is an essential feature of the Śrīcakra system. Many other groups of Śaktis exist.

The mythological names of the three Śaktis are Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā and Raudrī (NT 21,44; NST 4,10; JT 1,14f.); the KKV (22-24) connects Vāmā with Icchā, Raudrī with Kriyā and Jyeṣṭhā with Jñāna. Most often these three are involved in the phonic aspect of emanation which, however, deserves special attention (see below, ch. IV).

The realization of the divine: Macrocosm and Microcosm

Tantric thought is characterized by an extreme anthropocentrism. The doctrine that the human body corresponds to, is even identical with, the universe is seldom systematically expounded but nearly always self-understood. This holds good for a mystic body which is, according to a now common term, "superimposed upon", but perhaps better "intraposed within" the visible body. Microcosmic symbolism is especially prominent in the passages which deal with *kuṇḍalinīyoga*; the constant experimentation with yoga practices was certainly a major factor in the popularization of this field of speculation. The Parātriṃśikā (24) stated that the seed of the *nyagrodha* is related to that tree as the seed of the heart (which is the heart) to the world, while the yogin is able to mystically create the universe out of his heart lotus. An important term in this process hailing from the Trika is *vyāpti* "pervasion (by a mystical identity)". But already the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads contain many instances of macro-microcosmic equation (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 35). Knowledge of such mystical connections leads to power according to both Upaniṣadic and Tantric thought. Ancient ideas of the "cosmic being" (*mahāpuruṣa*) from the ṚV (10,90) onwards without doubt also exerted their influence (cf. also BĀU 3,2,13). It is, however, by no means evident that this concept of the body as a microcosm has its basis in the primitive materialism in which human body and earth or nature were felt to be interdependent (Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. XXI, 332f.).

A very common expression of this principle is the outright equation of the body (*deha*, *piṇḍa*) with the world or universe.[9] We also find many statements to the purport that gods, heavens, hells etc. are all present in the body (KJN 4,2f.; 14,62-65; KT 3,79; ToT 2,6ff.). Symbolic substitutes of the universe in this context are the Isle of Gems (see ch. V, p. 143) or the Śrīcakra (YHT 1,25f.

[9] KT 13,88; ToT 2,3; cf. the Bhuvanādhvan in the Kashmirian Āgama, e.g. MVT 5, in which the body is made to comprise the constituents of the universe. — The Balinese priests believe in a correspondence between the *bhuvana aguṅ* "great world" and the *bhuvana alit* "little world": Hooykaas, *Cosmogony and Creation*, p. 7.

and comms.; cf. ch. IV, p. 114). There are also direct or indirect homologations of the yogic body and the Meru (mythical mountain serving as the pivot of the universe) or other representations of the *axis mundi* (Avalon, *Principles of Tantra*, p. 666f.; ToT 2,1 : the body an "inverted tree"). While the upper part, especially the *dvādaśānta* (a mystic centre about twelve fingers' breadth above the head) or the *brahmarandhra* (fontanelle), is equated to the heavens, it is conceivable that the toes are said to be the abode of Kālāgni, the subterranean fire of destruction which is a form of Rudra (NT 7,17 and Brunner, p. 144, n. 1; Hooykaas, *Sūrya Sevanā*, p. 62, element Ka 18). Especially in older texts, the body is commonly considered to be a Śivaliṅga (KJN 3; MVT 8; Hooykaas, *Āgama Tīrtha*, p. 23; JSid, ch. 16). The famous mythical creation of a fiery liṅga or column by Śiva, by which feat that god established his cosmical sovereignty, is thus repeated in the persevering adept's mystic body. The liṅga is also a symbol of the reduction of existence to the original Whole or Void; the word itself is sometimes etymologically connected with the root *lī-* "to dissolve" (KJN 3,10; JK 3,8).

A consequence of the "cosmization" of the individual is that the body is made to encompass the world of the gods in particular ways. The hierarchical structure of the pantheon is concretized by a vertical order in the mystic centres. Often the system is built up by further equations with other important realities like the constituents of Oṃ, the stages of consciousness, and the elements. We shall illustrate this by means of a few of the older sources. The NT (22,25f.) offers the following scheme which is still lacking in rigour:

Part of body	*Deity*	*Part of Oṃ*	*Stage of consciousness*	*Element*	*Aspect of Śiva*
Dvādaśānta	— [Paramaśiva]	—	— turyānta	—	— Īśāna
forehead	— Sadāśiva	— nādānta	— turya	— śūnya	— ......
eyebrows	— Īśvara	— bindu	—	— vāyu	— Tatpuruṣa
palate	— Rudra	— ma	—	— fire	— Aghora
throat	— Viṣṇu	— u	—	— water	— Vāmadeva
heart	— Brahmā	— a	—	— [earth]	— Sadyojāta

This may be compared — as to the main deities — with the Brahmavidyā Up. (Viṣṇuite; 41f.) and the Jñānasiddhānta (ch. 10):

BVUp		*JSid*	
12 aṅgulas above tip of nose	supreme abode	head	Paramaśiva

tip of nose	Acyuta	hands	Sadāśiva
forehead	Maheśvara	eyebrows	Rudra
palate	Rudra	7 apertures	Mahādeva
throat	Viṣṇu	throat	Maheśvara
heart	Brahmā	heart	Viṣṇu
		navel	Brahmā

It is clear that this system has been worked out independently, but that the principle of vertical correspondence is the same. Another method is to locate the pantheon in the constituents of the psyche. This was done in the Krama system where Buddhi, Ahaṃkāra, Manas and the five sense organs were connected with the Eight Mothers (see below, p. 65), while Prāṇa "exhalation", Apāna "inhalation", Cit "consciousness" and Vimarśa "faculty of reflection" were presided over by the gods Gaṇapati, Vaṭuka, Ānandabhairava and Ānandabhairavī. According to directions incorporated in Abhinavagupta's Dehasthadevatācakrastotra (3ff.), the Indriyadevīs (the Eight Mothers) are located in a circular formation in the heart-lotus (ānandakanda) around the supreme pair of Ānandabhairava and his spouse. The Mothers worship this couple with the objects of the senses as their offerings. Besides, the Ātman (probably = Vaṭuka) serves as Kṣetrapati, Lord of the Site, on this mystic cremation ground (cf. Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, p. 16; p. 83ff.: the sacred cremation grounds of Nepal, esp. on p. 93). Sometimes, however, millions of deities usually called Rudras, Bhairavas or Yoginīs are said to reside in the body, which thus becomes the greatest of pīṭhas.

As may be expected, also the bipolarity which underlies the universe is reflected in the mystic body; most clearly in the case of the two lateral nāḍīs (yogic ducts) Iḍā and Piṅgalā which lie at the left and right sides of the Suṣumṇā (see further below, p. 168). In the pīṭha aspect, the Iḍā is the Gaṅgā and the Piṅgalā the Yamunā (RYT 25,45ff.). In the cosmological aspect, the former is the moon and the latter the sun (NT 7,2 and comm.; Dasgupta, *Tantric Buddhism*, p. 119ff.; Dwiveda, Introd. to NST, p. 104). The KT (15,35ff.) connects the lunar number sixteen with the Iḍā and the solar number twelve with the Piṅgalā, while the ŚT (1,40) combines the right side in general with the sun and with Agni, the left side with the moon and Soma (see also KT 15,35f.).[10] The Vedic triad Agni — Soma — Sūrya was maintained also here by the identification of the central duct with

[10] On water-fire symbolism in the body, see also the ISP, Kriyāpāda, 3,69; Rangachari, *Śrī Vaiṣṇava Brahmans*, p. 144 (the hands); SKD, st. 48; TBS, p. 370 (fiery mantras generated in the right side, aquatic or "somic" mantras in the left); RYT 17,97f. (liberation gained by fusion of the somic or amṛta and the fiery or kuṇḍalinī principles in the body).

Sūrya and the left and right ones with Soma and Agni (NT 7,2 and comm.). The sun-moon polarity also occurs in another way: the Yoga Upaniṣads know of a white bindu in the forehead which is the moon and seed, and a red bindu in the genitals which is the sun and (menstrual) blood (DhBU 88); elsewhere, we find the two bindus replaced by lotuses of thousand petals. The tradition is still living with the Bāuls of Bengal (Capwell, *Bāuls*, p. 259). The lunar number sixteen is again the number of syllables in the Śrīvidyā and the number of the Nityā goddesses (sometimes 15); the latter are equated with the particles of the moon in the NST (1,25ff.). The polarity of the male and the female is represented by the assignation — well known in Hinduism — of the female to the left and the male to the right side of the body (GT, p. 12; TSS 29,31f. and elsewhere; Bagchi, *Studies*, p. 68).

Since *mantra* and *cakra* are concrete representations of a higher reality, the body is thought of as identical with particular mantras or cakras, especially the Śrīvidyā and the Śrīcakra or Śrīyantra (see below, p. 114). Bhāskararāya, for instance, in the VVR (20f.) equates the upward course of the Kuṇḍalinī along the cakras Mūlādhāra etc. with a mystic recitation of the Śrīvidyā; the three parts (*kūṭa*) of this mantra are again identified with fire, sun and moon (cf. also BhāvUp 2; YHT 1,25f.; 2,69f.). Besides, the Śāktic *pīṭhas* are sometimes located in the body, a procedure which converts the Kuṇḍalinīyoga into a mystic pilgrimage. The oldest stage is perhaps the assignment of pīṭhas to the vertical row of cakras (KJN, cf. Bagchi's Introd., p. 57; RYT 17,51f.). But there are statements to the extent that all the fifty, fifty-one or even innumerable pīṭhas are present in the microcosm (YHT 3, 36ff.; cf. Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, p. 90f.). On the other hand, the actual sanctuaries in a certain area may be considered to represent the yogic microcosm.[11]

The path to liberation

Just as in Hindu speculation in general, liberation from the bondage of earthly existence is the chief goal for the Tantric thinkers. Their general principle is that the course of emanation described above should be followed by the individual adept in retrograde sequence. It is true that in certain traditions, especially that of the Siddhas, the perfection and "immortalization" of the body is held in high esteem, but this is a largely practical matter

[11] On Bali, six sanctuaries represent the six cakras: Hooykaas, *Religion in Bali*, p. 4. In Tamilnāḍu: Venkataraman, *Śakti Cult*, p. 258. In Nepal: Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, p. 93 (eight cremation grounds = the eight petals of the heart lotus).

which scarcely affects the mainstream of Tantric theory. In the "left" course, one should further strive after release by exactly those methods which in ordinary life are the cause of defilement — a very common maxim (see, e.g., Pratyagatmananda, *Realization*, p. 231).

The road to liberation is divided into stages or differentiated according to methods. Kashmir Śaivism knows four methods (*upāya* "accesses"), considered to be alternatives practised by different schools, but also fit to be followed the one after the other because of a certain inherent gradation (Silburn, trsl. of MM, p. 42ff.). Other sources, especially those of the Samaya school, distinguish seven "gradations" (*bhūmikā*) among them bhakti (Woodroffe, Ś.Ś., p. 224ff.). The best known series is, however, that of the six "roads" (*adhvan*) especially favoured in Śaivism, but accepted by the Śāktas and also found in the Pāñcarātra (dealt with in detail by Padoux, *Parole*, p. 261 ff.; see also Schomerus, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, p. 133ff.). They are alternative, but by no means mutually exclusive, courses of approaching the Absolute by meditation on its manifestation in different series of entities or categories: *varṇa* "letter", *mantra*, *pada* "position" or "site", *kalā* "particle", *tattva* "existential category" and *bhuvana* "earth" or "sphere". The first three constitute the "sound" (*vāc*) group, the others the 'meaning" (*artha*) group (KKV 12, comm.). Conforming to a frequent tendency, they are associated with numbers: *varṇa* with fifty (letters of the Sanskrit alphabet); *mantra* with seventy million; *pada* with eighty-one (9×9, number of sites in a yantra to be inscribed with potent syllables); *kalā* with thirty-eight (number of particles of Śiva) or, more frequently, with five (the vertical stages of consciousness *nivṛtti*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *vidyā*, *śāntā* and *śāntātītā*); *tattva* with thirty-six (see above, p. 52) or with three (Ātman, Vidyā and Śiva; on their role during pūjā, see below, p. 142); *bhuvana* with infinite, or with 118 (MVT) or 224 (SvT).

The chief practical course is the Kuṇḍalinīyoga (see ch. VI). In connection with it we sometimes find a theory of what may be called "vertical phases of microcosmic meditation". A passing reference may suffice, because the treatment of the subject in the texts is imperfectly clear. Most popular is a series of four called *piṇḍa* "solid mass", *pada* "position", *rūpa* "form" and *rūpātīta* "beyond form". According to the MVT (2,36ff.), piṇḍa lies on the plane of coarse realities, rūpa on that of mantras and rūpātīta on that of the Supreme Śakti; but other sources give different opinions. The series corresponds to a vertical order in the yogic body (see also ch. VI, p. 178). The KJN in a very unclear chapter (14; ed. Bagchi, p. 80) seems to assign different performances of vertical yoga to different Kaula schools.

Six roads - Śaktism

A leading role in the opening of the way to release is assigned to the Śakti in her Jñāna aspect. Without her grace or revelation, no redemption through the body is possible. This activity of the Śakti is most often described as a violent "descent" (*pāta*) upon the adept or a "possession" (*āveśa*) of his body and self (PMS 9 and 96; MVT 2,17ff.; Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 58f.). It can be observed by means of outward phenomena like shaking, staggering, falling on the ground etc., and is followed by a supreme serenity (VBT 111f.; MVT 11,35).

Liberation

Liberation or redemption (*mokṣa, mukti*) means casting off the limitations set by human birth. It can be obtained during life by means of the mortal body (RYT 25,88). The supreme abode is realized because the internal Śakti, with whom the yogin has completely identified himself, has reached her destination with the Supreme Śiva, thus restoring the primeval union (JK 1,9; 1,13). The result of this intensification of the "creative bipolarity" (cf. Pensa, *Considerazioni*, p. 394; 382f.; discussion of views brought forward by E. Neumann) is the flow of the internal amṛta which causes supreme bliss (VBT 65; NT 7,49), a bliss which is sometimes said to be brought about by the ritual use of meat and wine (KT 5,79f.). Nothing inspires fear to the liberated man who has realized his identity with the Ultimate, thereby destroying the subject-object relation which is the concomitant of bondage. Liberation is often expressed as an identification of the individual soul with Śiva or Devī (NT 8,35ff.; KT 9,16ff.). The *jīvanmukta* "liberated while alive" should constantly realize his identity with the Goddess Who acts through him (ŚST 1,11,42f.). Like the Divine, he is elevated above the dualities including good and evil. For him, the rituals (which he probably still executes) have lost their meaning; instead, he may concentrate on the performance of a symbolical course of ritual by mentally identifying the ritual acts with aspects of the supreme wisdom (VBT 142ff.; PMS 75ff.). He is like a boundless ocean without waves (VBT 129; KT 9,9); he wanders in isolation like a fire in the wood (AT, Ms. A, 69).

Sometimes the state of mokṣa is concretized by the use of more substantial expressions like "the eternal abode", "supreme abode", "the state of transcending the level of Mind" (*unmanī*); the state of "non-discursiveness" (*nirvikalpa*, VBT 43ff.; TrTU 5,11); "(state of) equal flavour" (of Śakti and Śiva; *samarasa* or *sāmarasya*); the state "born within" (*sahaja*, KT 9,34; the term is popular with the authors of the Buddhist Caryāpadas); "soaring above in the sky" (*khecara*, RYT 25,32); "emitting the psyche into the lotus

of the sky" (*vyomāmbuje cittavisarjanam*, RYT 29,50); or, characteristically, "communion of the goddesses of initiation and the spiritually powerful" (*yoginīvīramelanam* or a synonym, KT 10,73 a.o.; KJN 11,38 a.o.; VBT 141; cf. Carlstedt, *Till Kulas Lov*, p. 25).

The emphasis laid by siddhas or alchemists upon the goal of rendering the body immortal has been interpreted as a superimposition of the human craving for immortality upon the classical yogic liberation course (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 337). According to another view, the chief aim of the Śākta Tantric sādhanā is "to become a woman" by identification with the Mother;[12] but it would be more to the point to hold that the goal is the full realization of the primeval creative bisexuality, the *coniunctio* (more than a *coincidentia*) *oppositorum* (cf. Pensa, *Considerazioni*, p. 400). Be that as it may, the Tantras never forget to mention that the result of the sādhanā is also clearly visible and applicable in earthly life: besides *mukti*, the adept may expect to realize — if he desires so — *bhukti* "enjoyment": the good of life in every respect. On this subject the texts are extremely productive. Their enthusiasm cannot fail to suggest a lively interest in this aspect of the tradition. It is clear that the spiritual achievements of an adept tended to be measured by means of outward signs. Therefore, a siddha is said to be (we give only a few selected instances) "free of old age and death" (RYT 26, 82); "worshipped by the gods" (ŚST 1,12,5); the favourite of women (PST 9,23ff.; JT ch. 17); healthy and prosperous (NT 7,4f.); eloquent (SL 17); his father and mother are fortunate (ŚST 1,12,5). But he is also able to destroy the world by his wrath (ŚST 1,11,53, adding the warning that one should beware of irritating a siddha) or to perform acts of "punishment" (*nigraha*, which may imply execution) or "grace" (*anugraha*).

The Pantheon

This interesting and complicated subject can be treated here only too briefly; a detailed study of the structure of the Tantric pantheon is a desideratum. The adherents of the different denominations consider, of course, the world of the gods to emanate from their chief deity who is mentioned by many names because he/she manifests him/herself in accordance with the diverging needs of different groups of devotees. Thus, with the Śaivites, Sadāśiva is the name of the Supreme God in the Southern Āgama; in Kashmirian Śaivism, this position is held by Bhairava (cf. Brunner, *Netra*

[12] Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism etc.*, p. 146; Chattopadhyay, *Lokāyata*, p. 286, connects this with ancient sexual rites of vegetation.

Tantra, p. 134), a god who is usually accompanied by a number of Śaktis (Brunner, *o.c.*, p. 152; Mālatīmādhava 5,1).

With the Śāktas, the nomenclature of the Great Goddess is extremely varied; it is commonly accepted that many names connected with particular manifestations denote originally independent regional or village goddesses who were identified in a later stage with the Devī of the "great tradition".[13] In Tantrism, all the divine functions possess a name and a corresponding iconographical reality. All Tantric deities are identical with mantras and bījas on the sound level and by means of the latter can be created or "forced" (*sādhita*) by an adept who is initiated into the procedure. Very often these deities are ambivalent; the best known instance is the double manifestation of Devī: two groups of "white" and "black" goddesses emanating from the benevolent and terror-inspiring sides of her nature, respectively Gaurī-Umā-Pārvatī and Durgā(Mahiṣamardinī)-Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā (Mishra, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 22). The Brahmanizing KVT (ch. 23; 24,13), however, explains the black manifestation as Kālī as secondary and due to a reversal of Gaurī's true nature. Very popular are the descriptions of Kālī while she indulges in cannibalism, with emaciated figure, protruding teeth, rolling eyes and a tongue hanging out of her mouth while she is covered with severed heads. These horrific features are often explained symbolically by puristically minded exegetes; thus, the streams of blood vomited by the goddess are said to stand for the quality of *rajas* "passion" done away with; the severed head for "the seat of Tattvajñāna (knowledge of Ultimate Reality) free of attachment", etc. (Vimalananda Swami, comm. on KPS).

Besides the benign and the ferocious, a third appearance of Devī is that of a voluptuous young woman as a representation of the *ānanda* aspect of Brahman (Kāmākhyā, Tripurasundarī, Nityaklinnā). A certain prevalence of ferocious deities in later Tantrism might have its origin in times of political and economic instability, but this has yet to be proved (if possible) by careful research. The exact nature of the Śākta pantheon is very difficult to determine because of the lack of system in the texts themselves which often use names and epithets of different aspects of the Śakti quite indiscriminately. Some manifestations are, however, ordered into clear-cut groups; thus, we have:

[13] Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism etc.*, p. 144f. (with an interesting classification); Gonda, ***Rel. Indiens II***, ch. 1; clear and well known cases are Vindhyavāsinī, (Parna)śabarī, Mātaṅgī; and Mīnākṣī in the South. — On their iconography, see, in general, Banerjea, *Iconography*, p. 489-509; Rao, *Iconography*, I, p. 338 ff.; N.K. Bhattasali, ***Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum***, Dacca 1929, p. 191-227.

1. The Ten Mahāvidyās: Kālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chinnamastā, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā, Mātaṅgī, Kamalā (list from the Muṇḍamālā Tantra, cf. Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 85).

2. The Nine Durgās: Śailaputrī, Brahmacāriṇī, Caṇḍaghaṇṭā, Kūṣmāṇḍā, Skandamātā, Kātyāyanī, Kālarātrī, Mahāgaurī, Siddhidātrī or Devadūtī (Sharma, *Śakti Cult*, p. 232; other lists exist).

3. The triad Sundarī — Kālī — Tārā considered to be the three supreme manifestations of Tripurā in the ŚST. For them, the KālPur (ch. 78) gives the names Bālā, Sundarī and Bhairavī.

4. As "specialized" or "minor" manifestations might be considered the famous group of the Mothers. They are nine in number in the Devīmāhātmya, for the greater part female doubles of some important gods of Hinduism: Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā, Śivadūtī and Kālī (Banerjea, *Iconography*, p. 504f.), but in other texts usually seven (the first seven of the mentioned series), often flanked by Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa (Mallmann, *Enseignements*, p. 150ff.). A group of eight (the seven plus Mahālakṣmī or another figure) presides over the eight sections of the alphabet (SvT 1,33f.; KMT ch.24); they can be found in combination with the eight Bhairavas (see group 5).

5. The eight Bhairavas are most often called Asitāṅga, Ruru, Caṇḍa, Krodha, Unmatta, Kapālin, Bhīṣaṇa and Saṃhārin (KCT 1,5-12; GarPur 198,2ff.); they are combined with the eight mothers in the JT (4,63ff.) as *pīṭha* deities of Tripurā (cf. also Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, p. 17 and 91f.).

Other well-known groups of secondary goddesses and gods in the Śākta pantheon include:

6. Attendant deities to be worshipped round an image (real or mental) of the main deity or on its pedestal (*āvaraṇadevatā-*, cf. below p. 151); also Śiva is very often surrounded by female attendants, preferably in groups of eight headed by Vāmā, Siddhā, Jayā and others. The group Vāmā etc. can also serve as attendants for Devī (JT 7,12f.).

7. Deities of the Śrīyantra (BhāvUp. 2; NST 1,151ff.; Woodroffe, *Analysis* of the TT, p. 6ff.).

8. The fifteen or sixteen Nityā deities, connected with the Śrīvidyā (ŚST 3,12,36f.; NST 1,25ff.; TT chs. 3ff.).

9. The deities of the six cakras of the yogic microcosm (RYT 26ff.). The most frequent series is headed by Ḍākinī.

10. Deities of the alphabet, usually a group of fifty (ŚT 2,29ff.: three groups, Rudras, Viṣṇus, Gaṇeśas; MVT 3,15ff.; KMT 24); a special group among them is constituted by the lords of the Dvīpas, microcosmic "continents" (KMT 24).

11. Yoginīs "goddesses or mistresses of yoga", originally connected with Pīṭhas according to Kṣemarāja (comm. on NT 2,13ff.); they are most often eight or sixty-four in number. This group is probably due to a mixture of popular goddesses, female ascetics, perhaps with initiatory functions, and abstractions of psychic powers (Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 340f.; Silburn, *Introd.* to MM, p. 9). The group of sixty-four has been worshipped in a circular pattern in temples (Banerjea, *Religion*, p. 129; Mallmann, *Enseignements*, p. 304f.; Jhavery, *Mantrashastra*, p. 233f.).

12. Other similar groups are the Ḍākinīs, Ḍāmarīs, Dūtīs (a kind of Āvaraṇa deities in cases like TSS 27,35), Bhaginīs "Sisters", etc.

13. Deities of the site of worship, especially Vaṭuka and Kṣetrapāla; a female counterpart is Nirmālyadhāriṇī or Caṇḍeśvarī. Gods like these can also function as bearers of the remnants of the food offerings presented to the main deity.

14. Deities of magic, often Yakṣas or Yakṣiṇīs, especially favoured by the Indrajāla texts, but by no means unknown to other Tantra authors. A special group is formed by the six goddesses of the Six acts of magic (see p. 35) headed by Rati (MMD 25,6).

The above list is certainly not exhaustive, but suffices to give an impression of the complexity of the subject. Indology is in need of a systematic survey accompanied by a carefully compiled index.

A few words on Tantric mythology: from the rich storehouse of Hindu myths, the Tantras tend to favour a few above all others. These are, in connection with Śiva: a. The cutting off of Brahmā's fifth head by this god, in a sense symbolical for the emergence of the Tantra-influenced period in Hinduism (cf. Banerjea, *Iconography*, p. 465; Rao, *Iconography*, II,1,105ff.; 296ff.; II,2,366ff.); b. Śiva's conquest of Tripura, the "threefold fortress" built by the enemies of the gods (Banerjea, *Iconography*, p. 487) and similar myths of the vanquishing of demons; c. Śiva's burning of Kāma with his third eye (ŚST 2,69,13ff.); d. Śiva's wanderings through the forest of the ascetics as a naked mendicant: the "Devadāru complex" iconographically represented by the Bhikṣāṭanamūrti (sometimes confounded with the Kaṅkālamūrti which refers to myth (a); O'Flaherty, *Asceticism*, p. 272ff.; Banerjea, *Iconography*, p. 483f.; Bosch, *Dinaja*, p. 238ff.).

The most important Devī myths seem to be: a. Birth of an aspect of the goddess, often in a pond or lake. Famous instances are Nīlasarasvatī in central Asia and Bagalāmukhī; in folklore, ponds are sometimes explained as a *yoni* of the Goddess (Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 8); b. The Mahiṣa myth: Devī as Mahiṣamardinī (without doubt one of her oldest manifestations) slays the buffalo demon of that name (Devīmāhātmya; KālPur 61,5ff.;

Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 229ff.). There are other myths of similar content; c. The Satī complex: the division of Devī's dead body limb by limb over India; the place where a limb fell became a pīṭha (Sircar, *o.c.*, p. 5ff.; on Devī myths in general, cf. Beane, *Myth, Cult and Symbols*, p. 169ff.).

Many tales of the deeds of yogins and siddhas are to be styled as legends; one of the best known concerns the overhearing of the sacred wisdom by Matsyendranātha (Bagchi, *Introd.* to KJN, p. 10). Legends are also told of famous Tantric savants like Bhāskararāya (R. Krishnaswami Sastri, *Introd.* to VVR, p. XXIIIf.).

PART TWO

TRANSMISSION AND FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUENTS OF THE PRACTICE

BY

DIRK JAN HOENS

CHAPTER THREE

TANTRIC TRANSMISSION

Dīkṣā : Introduction

Persons all over the world have to perform or to go through certain rites if they want to have contact with things or beings belonging to the divine world. What a person considers to belong to this divine world depends from his cultural and social environment. If these rites form a system of purifications and instructions they are called initiation by which is reached "a radical change of the aspirant's religious and social state" (cf. Eliade in R.G.G.[3] III, 751). From these statements it is clear that initiation is not necessarily confined to the tantric currents in Indian religion. And indeed, initiation occurs already in the texts belonging to the Vedic-brahmanic period. Several forms of initiation can be traced here.

a) The so-called *upanayana* ("leading to oneself" : i.e. the guru leads the pupil to himself). Till recently it still had the same meaning : every young man belonging to the higher classes of the Indian society had to be instructed in certain rites, texts and their interpretation in order to become a full member of that society. Now, the upanayana rite gave him admission to this instruction, which lasted a few years. Today the rite itself still exists but the period of instruction is confined to one single day. Important elements of the instruction were : 1. the reception of the famous mantra ṚV III, 62, 10; 2. the daily rites; 3. the Vedic scripture and 4. other knowledge important for daily life.

b) Another form of initiation was the *dīkṣā*, which is the common technical term in the Tantras. The word is perhaps a derivation from the desiderative of the root *dakṣ* : "to be able, to be fit" (Monier Williams, *Skt. Eng. Dictionary* p. 201). In the performance of a soma-sacrifice (cf. Lévi, *Doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 103ff.) the institutor of a sacrifice (the yajamāna) and his wife become fit for the participation by means of the dīkṣā which is characterized by fasting, being shut up in a cabin, and sitting in silence on a black antelope hide; when in need of speaking, one stammers.

c) The ancient Indian royal consecration, the *rājasūya*, also knew a dīkṣā followed by an aspersion rite, the *abhiṣeka*, (Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 114ff.). The tantric dīkṣā has certain elements in common with both the ancient Indian upanayana and dīkṣā.

The upanayana and the tantric dīkṣā have in common: a) A special relationship between teacher and pupil and b) the communication of a mantra by the teacher.

The older dīkṣā and the tantric initiation have in common: a) The hut which has an important role in both rites and b) the aspersion rite, the abhiṣeka as a rite which sometimes follows the dīkṣā.

In the tantras the term dīkṣā is often explained in the following way: "Since it can give divine insight and can effect the destruction of evil it is called dī-kṣā" *(divyaṃ jñānaṃ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṃkṣayaṃ tasmād dīkṣeti saṃproktā*, ŚT IV, 2). Another Tantra says: *divyabhāvaṃ dadyāt*: "it can give the divine state"; *kṣiṇuyād duritān* and "can destroy misfortune" (PT V, 2). In both Tantras the word dīkṣā is supposed to be a compound of the roots *dā*, to give and *kṣi-*, to destroy. LT (XLI, 5-6) gives two explanations:

a) "It severs kleśas, karman etc. and it shows all states of existence": *yad dyati kleśakarmādīn īkṣayaty akhilaṃ padam*) and

b) "Having destroyed all impurity it gives the highest place" (*kṣapayitvā malaṃ sarvaṃ dadāti ca paraṃ padam*). The second explanation also derives dīkṣā from *dā-* and *kṣi-* but the first from *do-* to cut, to sever and *īkṣ-* to see.

Though these explanations are not philologically acceptable they have some merit as they point to two aspects which indeed are significant for every dīkṣā: the aspect of purification and that of divine contact. In every dīkṣā there is a great deal of purification from impurity of ritual of cognitive nature, which paves the road for the other aspect: receiving contact with the divine world. It is true, only certain forms of dīkṣā can give a divine state of existence or divine knowledge, but every dīkṣā does provide introduction into a new sādhanā with a new set of rules for rites and conduct (*samaya*).

Divya-, vīra- and paśubhāva

In one of the texts just mentioned the result of the dīkṣā is the divine state of existence (*divyabhāva*) which in PT V, 2 is described by *siddhi*: perfection. Now there are two other states of existence: *paśu*, "cattle" which in śaiva circles is a well-known qualification of man chained by the bonds of "atom-like" nature, karman and lack of knowledge; and *vīra*, "hero". Eliot (*Hinduism*, II 283) says that three conditions of man called the animal, heroic and divine, are often mentioned and are said to 1. characterize three periods of life: youth, manhood and age; 2. three classes of mankind: non-tantrists, ordinary tantrists and adepts. These

three conditions clearly correspond to the three guṇas. Eliot does not give any reference to texts on which his statements are based. Now, only what Eliot says about three classes of mankind clearly refers to Prāṇatoṣiṇī 965 where paśu is related to the rules of conduct (*ācāra*) of Veda, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas; vīra is related to *dakṣiṇa-* and *vāmācāra*, and divya is related to *siddhānta* and *kaulācāra*. Consultation of other statements in the KT and of a commentary on PT gives the following picture. According to KT II, 122ff. the kula path is full of danger and should be avoided by a paśu. This danger is expressed in the following words (V, 48): "perfection is attained by those things which lead to fall" (the five Makāras: wine, meat, fish, parched grain and sexual union).[1] V, 93 makes it perfectly clear by saying that if the drinking of wine is done in a paśu way even a vīra will go to hell. KT XVII, 25 gives the following derivation of vīra "On account of desire, arrogance, bad condition, anger, envy and delusion having gone and of great distance from passion and spiritual darkness he is called a vīra" (*vītarāgamadakleśakopamātsaryamohatas rajastamovidūratvād vīra ityabhidhīyate*). XIV, 43-45 tells how by a process of symbolic destruction and creation by means of letters (the so-called *varṇadīkṣā*) the pupil's divine state of existence (*devatābhāva*) is born; it consists of the highest bliss (*ānandamaya*). This *varṇadīkṣā* is said to be *pāśahara*: removing the bonds of existence. A similar process by means of yoga (the *kalādīkṣā*) also results in the divine state of existence (*divyabhāva*; KT XIV, 50). From these statements the following conclusions can be drawn: a paśu is a person who is bound by natural human desires, passions and spiritual darkness and therefore should avoid the kula path. A vīra on the other hand is a person who has his desires and passions well under control and therefore is able to stand the temptation and dangers of the pañcatattvas (the five M's) of the kula path. Yet he is not completely free from the bonds of human existence. Only in the divya- or devatābhāva a person is completely free from those pāśas and full of divine knowledge (divyajñāna). Certain forms of dīkṣā (varṇa and kalā) lead a person from vīra- to divyabhāva. The divyabhāva is not the highest state according to KT XIV 63 which also knows of a śivabhāva.

A second text which gives information is the Vivaraṇa on the PT. There Padmapādācārya makes the following distinction between paśu, vīra and divya. The paśu is hardly to be expected to see beyond the *sthūla* or gross aspects of things. In the vīra there is an urge to reach the plane beyond sthūla. The true vīra is fighting the six enemies (the passions). The

[1] See the cakrapūjā, p. 147, 155.

divya is as the result of this practice in previous births endowed with qualities which make him *almost* divine. Compared with the statements in KT there is similarity as far as the pāśa is concerned. However, the vīra and divya according to KT seem to be further on the road to perfection than in the PTV. There also is a comparable classification in older Vaiṣṇava saṃhitās such as JS and LT which distinguish three types of dīkṣā : *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle) and *para* (highest) but where terms comparable to *paśu*, *vīra* and *divya* do not occur. In one of the younger tantras (MNT) the following picture of these three bhāvas is given (I, 55-59) : a paśu must collect with his own hands leaves, flowers, fruits and water and should not look at a śūdra or think of a woman. In the vīrasādhana the pañcatattvas are used (cf. also X, 204). The divya is like a deity, ever pure of heart, beyond all opposites (heat and cold etc.), free from desire, enduring.[2] How can there be purity of the state of existence (*śuddhabhāva*) of those who are connected with (the) stains of the Kali (age)?[3]

In this Kali (age) there is no paśubhāva; the divyabhāva is difficult to attain (*durlabha*), the rites of the *vīrasādhanā* are manifest in the Kali age (MNT IV, 19). Apparently the requirements for paśu and divya both are impossible or nearly impossible in the period with which the MNT is dealing. The paśu obviously is the person who is engaged in the more exoteric cult. The divya's purity of state of existence is difficult to attain. In MNT the meaning of the three states of existence is more or less the same as in the earlier texts.

The guru

Before going into the subject of the tantric dīkṣā extensively the persons involved in that initiation ask the attention : the teacher, called *ācārya* or *guru* and the pupil, the *śiṣya*. After some remarks on the position of the guru in Hinduism in general, his position, his role and requirements in Tantrism will be described. After that the pupil, his role and requirements will be dealt with.

As is well known Hinduism bases itself on a body of sacred texts believed to be without any human origin and temporal beginning. These are the texts known as *śruti* (hearing). After them comes the tradition,

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[2]. Cf. Kṣemarāja in his commentary on NT : the vīra endures everything in the sādhana.
[3] Any author considers the period in which he lives as Kaliyuga.

the *smrti*.[4] The difference between them does not so much concern the degree of authority which all these texts have but its extension. All śruti texts are considered to be authoritative for all Hindus. Of the smrti some have authority but only for some schools in Hinduism, other texts for other schools. Now the ācārya is in charge of the interpretation of the texts and of their transmission to the next generation. The great importance of the ācārya becomes even more evident if one is aware of the fact that the sacred tradition was partly secret either by content or by form of transmission.

From ancient times onwards, there exists in India the upanayana already mentioned earlier in this chapter. Now the ācārya not only instructs the pupil but also performs the *upanayana* ceremony. During this ceremony the sacred Sāvitrīmantra is muttered into the right ear of the pupil by the ācārya. Some rites of the ceremony, especially those concerning the relationship between teacher and pupil, have great similarity with rites of the wedding ceremony, thus pointing to their intimate relation. In fact during his time of instruction the pupil has to fulfil many household tasks which are performed by a housewife in a family.

In the Upaniṣads there are teachers who give instruction to pupils living in the teacher's residence (*ācāryakulavāsin*, *ChU II, 23*) but also to kings and fellow-teachers at the king's court and even to a boy whose father was unknown (ChU IV, 4, 5). And already in the BĀU there are three lists of teacher succession (II, 6; IV, 6; VI, 5). This *paramparā*[5] of teachers of the same school must be distinguished from the *saṃpradāya* which refers to a tradition of the doctrine of a school transmitted from one teacher to another. According to some rather early Upaniṣads the ācārya or guru is also active as teacher and example in the field of yoga (MuU I, 2, 13; MaiU 6, 28). As a result of his own training in yoga the teacher is able to estimate the qualifications and possibilities of his pupils in a transcendental way. The ideal teacher is he who is a good expositor of the tradition and at the same time an expert in yoga. From the very beginning the main thing which is required from a pupil is confidence (*śraddhā*) in the person of the guru and in the truth of his statements. Since the beginning of the Christian era this śraddhā alone is not enough: "These (mysterious) things which have been declared become evident to him of noble nature who has the highest loving service (*bhakti*) to the deity and to his teacher as to the deity (Śiva)" (*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā*

[4] *Śruti* generally is considered to be the revelation, *smṛti* the tradition, *śruti* is considered to be authoritative for all, *smṛti* not.

[5] The term paramparā refers to the succession of teachers in the same school.

deve tathā gurau ŚvU 6, 23). In the Bhagavadgītā and the Epic in general, bhakti continues to be essential in a pupil. In a verse attributed to the great theologian and philosopher Śaṅkara (8th cent. A.D.) it is said: "The guru is Viṣṇu, the guru is Śiva, the guru is Brahman himself, there is no greater *deva* than the guru". Such was the position of the guru in the period of the beginning of Tantrism.

In this context it is useful to remember that in Hinduism certain types of gods are considered to be mightier and happier beings than man, although they too need liberation (*mokṣa*). In the older tantric texts the position of the guru is similar to that known from the pretantric texts. He is not a mortal being (TT I, 38); he is addressed as Śiva in a hymn (I, 96-100). At the moment of giving the vidyā (a mantra belonging to a female deity) the guru is the goddess (II, 54). In the KT he is considered to be the centre of the whole process of liberation because: "without dīkṣā there is no mokṣa, and there is no dīkṣā without an ācārya" (XIV, 3). No wonder that in the same tantra the following statement occurs: "there is no god higher than the guru"; "the compassion of the guru is the root of mokṣa"; "Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva a.o. are content if the guru is content" and "there is no difference between Sadā-śiva and the guru."

From these references it becomes evident that the guru is, at least according to some of the sources, not only a god but even the highest god. At the same time TT II, 54 and other texts make it clear that he is not always a god. At the time of giving a mantra to the pupil the god appears in a human body and "just as an image and a yantra in which the devatā is seated is the body of the guru".

So one can understand that the guru is called a god but that at the same time the pupil should test him regarding his qualifications. These do not only include qualities as for instance: "being familiar with many tantras" (*bahutantravid*); "resolving doubts" (TT I, 19-22), "who knows the essence of all the subjects of the *śāstras*",[6] "who is learned in the Veda and the meaning of the Veda", "who is skilful in going the path of yoga", "touching the heart of the god" (ST II, 141-144); "knowing of examination and reasoning", "entirely engaged in the supreme spirit" (*adhyātmavyākula*); "not corrupting the darśanas" (PT XXXIII, 22-33, esp. in 31); "dear to the devotees", "who does not give yantra and tantra for sale"; "who knows the difference between capable and incapable people" (*pātrāpātraviśe-*

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[6] KT XIII, 38-118 gives more details about tattvas and mudrās (cf. also AS XX, 1-70).

ṣavid) (KT XIII, 43, 45, 49); not only these things can be expected from a guru, but also "physical well-being and not being possessed by illness and unattractiveness"; "faultlessness of figure", "good conduct", "being of pure conduct "having given up love", "being grave and without fraud", "always honest", "compassionate", "patient" (PT; ST; KT). In this context it is remarkable that, whereas TT and ST still have a modest number of requirements, PT and KT have long lists of them. The last-mentioned text also gives a list of qualifications of a bad guru (KT XIII, 12-22): "he is ugly, has extravagance of limbs, is sleepy, dull, gambling, crooked, deceiving others, destroying secrets" (of the mantra and such others). It is not surprising that he is destroying confidence in himself. And the same KT (XIII, 99-109) says that the guru "who gives wisdom just by instruction, who is without any expectation (*sarvasaṃkalpahīna*) is difficult to obtain", just as a guru "who is well learned in the matter of the highest principle" (*tattva*) and one "who knows mantras as spoken by nigama, āgama and śāstras". None of the texts consulted gives a systematic treatment of the tasks of the guru. However, there are a few older texts which furnish some direct information and many texts which give indirect information on this subject. The first task of an ācarya is of course the following:

1. He examines (*parīkṣate*) the aspirant or pupil. This is the only part of the teacher's duties with which TT, ST, PT and .KT deal extensively (cf. AS XX 8-10). The pupil should not only show characteristics which regard his instruction directly, as for instance: "who is faithful to the guru (*śraddhāvān*), who believes in a god, who has steadful bhakti to the guru (TT I, 23-24), who is intent on obedience with voice, mind, body and material goods" (ST II, 147); "whose endeavour is after *mukti*, who has studied the Veda, who considers the guru's wife and sons his mother and brothers" (PT XXXIII, 40); "who is devoted to the practice of muttering and meditation and who longs for the road to liberation" (cf. KT XIII, 27, 32-34), but also physical and moral qualifications such as "having a firm body, being young, without illness, well-dressed, with pure body and garments" (TT, PT and KT); "not covetous, who has controlled his senses, clever, highly free from sexual desire, of little food and sleep, devoted to service of others, smiling, not proud, of steadfast vows, serving without deceit, helpful to everyone, talking beneficially, truthfully and sparingly, with concealed intentions" (TT, ŚT, PT and KT). In PT the characteristics of those who have to be refused by the ācārya as a pupil are: "who is ill, blind, deaf, lame, lazy, full of passion (*rāgin*), sleepy, mischievous, attached to the fulfilment of selfish things." The passage ends with the following statement: "the guru should never accept a pupil with such

Adhikari Lakshana

qualities. As surely as the fault of the minister falls on the king and the fault of the wife falls on the husband, so truly the fault made by the pupil falls on the guru" (XXXIII, 42-50).

2. A second task is the instruction (*upadeśa*) (TT I 52-57, 82, 83; KT XII, 81, 85). Th pupil is instructed in the construction and the meaning of the *cakra* (or *maṇḍala*) and *yantra*;[7] b) in the effective power (*vīrya*) of the mantra[8] and the first and last *mātṛkā* (energy of the letters) *a* and *kṣa*. *a* is the original letter (sound) which precedes all and to which they all return. It is omnipresent *kṣa* consisting of *ka* and *sa* symbolizes the unsolvable unity between Śiva and his energy (*śakti*), source of all letters.[9] c) the worship (*pūjā*)[10] of the *iṣṭadevatā*.[11] d) one or more hand-gestures (*mudrā*).[12] Part of this instruction, especially b) and d) is dangerous and is therefore kept secret. e) the ritual of the initiation (*dīkṣā*) and the consecration (*abhiṣeka*), though not *expressis verbis* mentioned in the text certainly must have been a part of the instruction just as the teaching of the conduct (*ācāra*)[13] which the student has to follow in the period between the several dīkṣās. This ācāra not only includes what acts he has to perform or to abstain from, but also the kind of yoga to which he has to devote himself and the kind of people he should meet or not. KT XIV, 12 makes it clear that guru and pupil both go to the twenty-one terrifying hells if the former does not give his instruction according to the handbooks (*aśāstriyopadeśa*).

3. A very important task of the guru is of course the performance of the initiation and consecration rites. He also decides when the pupil has obtained the qualifications necessary for taking these rites. According to KT XIV, 23, 24 there are some interesting characteristics which betray that the pupil is ready to undergo the dīkṣā : "in whom at remembering, mentioning, seeing, praising, serving, calling on or commission of the guru there are changes of the hairs, voice and eye caused by trembling with bliss, they are qualified for the act of the rite of dīkṣā (*yogyā dīkṣāsaṃskārakarmaṇi*). This means that the guru is watching the pupil who normally lives at his residence very closely all the time. The length of the period of instruction depends on the progress made by the pupil (from one up till four or five years). Two tantras relate the number of years of instruction to the varṇa of the pupil : one year for a brahmin,

[7] See p. 112f.
[8] See p. 105f.
[9] Cf. Padoux, *op. cit.*, 192, 249.
[10] See Ch. 5.
[11] "The chosen deity" who is assigned to the pupil during the initiation ceremony.
[12] See p. 115f.
[13] Cf. KT XIV 5.

two years for a ksatriya, three years for a vaiśya and four years for a śūdra. (TT II, 37, 38; ŚT II, 153).

Whereas the tantras give only scanty information about the task of the *ācārya* (*guru*) they are very eloquent as far as the obligations of the pupil are concerned: a) of course the pupil should be "eager to listen (*śuśrūṣu*) for thereby all evil is destroyed, the qualities of merit grow, all duties have success" (KT XII 66, 67); b) he should worship the guru with *bhakti*. "The *bhakti* to the guru should be the same as to Viṣṇu and Śiva, father and mother" (PT XXXIII, 52, 57; KT XII, 35). The Kulārṇava in a long passage (XII) even exalts bhakti above everything: "not the knowledge of the Vedas, but bhakti is decisive even if the pupil should be a man who cooks dog's meat" (27) "all asceticism, knowledge, even a vow comes to nothing without bhakti" (29, 36, 38). Insight grows with bhakti (37). There should always be non-duality (*advaita*) between guru and pupil (63). Bhakti burns all bad actions related to the great sins (*aśubhāni karmāṇi mahāpātakajāni*) (41). c) In the presence of the guru the pupil should avoid speaking without permission, cheating, sleep, buying and selling, association with enemies of the guru (PT XXIV, 55). d) On the guru's birthday the pupil should respectfully make a feast, a special pūjā, a meal and pay homage to the guru's feet (TT I, 31). e) Just as was the case in pre-tantra times the tantras forbid certain acts in the neighbourhood of the ācārya, as for instance: one should not cross his shadow, his footprint, his stick, his carriage or anything else one can think of, "one should not pass urine or faeces, spit saliva or vomit" (PT XXXIII, 52, 54; KT XXII, 102).

A pupil can switch to another guru if he thinks that he can find one who has better qualifications for conferring a higher form of dīkṣā. Not every guru is equally specialized in all fields, viz. knowledge of tantraśāstra, mantra or yoga. So the pupil should choose the guru who is specialized in the field in which he wants special instruction. Rāmeśvara in his commentary on PKS I, 20 clearly says that once the pupil has embraced the secret Kaula system he should not switch over to another guru.

Both discipleship and guruship are not exclusively confined to men. At least in circles of the kulacārins one knew the possibility of women to become pupil and guru (KT VII, 38 and RYT II, 107).[14] We have not much information about female gurus in other tantric schools. About discipleship KT XIV, 105 says "a widow, a daughter and a wife are only qualified as a pupil for dīkṣā by instruction of her son, by the permission

[14] According to RYT 2, 110 a widow is excluded from guruship.

of her father and her husband" (cf. LT XLI, 13). Nowadays female pupils and gurus are quite common.

The course of the dīkṣā ritual

Proceeding now to discuss the performance of the dīkṣā itself it seems best to begin with a description of the main elements of its lowest form, the *kriyāvatī* (ritualistic). As can be expected in the case of an institution which has a long history the order of the elements has not always exactly been the same. We follow the ŚT (III, IV, V up to 115) because it gives a clear picture of the ritual.

First day. Preparation of the place of the dīkṣā

1. The worship of the place (*vāstuyāga*) (III, 1-18; PT V, 4-16).
2. Construction of the (pūjā) pavilion (*maṇḍapa*) where the main rites of the dīkṣa are to take place (19-26; PT V, 17).
3. In the *maṇḍapa* a square platform (*vedi*) is erected for the maṇḍala[15] (27, 28; V, 19).
4. Placing of vessels (*pātrāṇi*) and offering of shoots (*aṅkurārpaṇam*) (34-37; V, 18-29).
5. Preparation of eight pits (*kuṇḍa*) which can have different forms owing to the circumstances (quadrangular, semi-circular, triangular) (49-90; V, 30-32 : 5 pits).
6. The drawing of the four maṇḍalas (103-135; V, 36-70).

Second day. Preparation of the teacher and the pupil

7. The teacher should take a bath, being adorned, having performed the first daily rites, be silent and go to the sacrificial pavilion (IV, 4-5; PT VI, 17).
8. He should perform the worship of the door of the pavilion (*dvārapūjā*) (6-11).
9. He should purify himself and make his own body the seat of Dharma, Sūrya, Indra and Pāvaka (Agni) (23-55a).
10. He should perform the pūjā in front of the image of the deity (89-117).
11. The pupil who has sipped water should perform the application on the different parts of his body (*nyāsa*) (136).[16]

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[15] See p. 112f.
[16] See p. 143f.

12. He should get a tooth-brush (blessed with a mantra) from his teacher and after having cleansed his teeth throw it away (137).
13. The teacher and the pupil should pass the night on the vedi on darbha-grass together (138).

Third day. The dīkṣā itself

14. The pit for agni (fire) is prepared, the fire brought into it and worshipped (V, 1-33; PT VI, 68-75).
15. Sacrifice of melted butter (*ājya*) into the fire (52-58).
16. The pupil should go to the fire-pit with cleansed teeth, after a bath, after drinking of the five substances of the cow and in a state of concentration (76ff.).
17. The guru should look at him with a divine look, unite the pupil's mind with his own and then perform the purification of the (six) paths (*adhvaśodhana*)[17]: while touching the pupil's legs the guru thinks of the *kalā* path, while touching his genitals he should think of the *tattva* path; while touching his navel he should think of the *bhuvana* path; while touching his heart he should think of the *varṇa* path; while touching his throat he should think of the *pada* path and touching his head he should think of the *mantra* path. In this way the six paths are destroyed in Śiva and then produced again (79-95).
18. The pupil, whose eyes are blindfolded with the *netramantra*, is led to the maṇḍala; his hands are filled with flowers which he has to throw into the direction of a jar, the guru reciting the mūlamantra (100-102).
19. The teacher then once more destroys and reproduces the pupil by means of the bhūtaśuddhi[18] and then applies different mantras to the body.
20. The follows the worshipping of the *iṣṭadevatā* received by throwing the flowers (104).
21. The teacher should asperse (*abhiṣiñcet*) the pupil by means of accomplished water (*susādhitais toyaiḥ*) together with the *mūlamantra*; also the mātṛkā[19] after being worshipped is sprinkled. By this process the pupil has become identical with the deity who is worshipped by the guru (109, 110).
22. The teacher then gives the *vidyā* to the pupil; the pupil should repeat it eight times affecting by his mind the unity of the vidyā, the guru and the deity (111, 112 cf. PT VI, 121).

[17] See p. 100f.
[18] See p. 136f.
[19] See p. 97.

23. The pupil should bow down on the earth in a straight line (*daṇḍavat*) in front of the guru and bring the feet of the latter in contact with his head and should offer to him (*nivedayet*) his body, his wealth, his whole life (cf. PT VI, 117). From that moment the pupil should make himself dear to the guru by thinking of him only.
24. The pupil should feed the guru and the assisting priests and give *dakṣiṇās* to them.

Some comment on the ritual of the dīkṣā. From the foregoing survey it is clear that, though the main lines can clearly be traced, there are traces of later developments as can be expected in ŚT which dates not earlier back than the eleventh century.

1. The worship of the place is a very common feature as an introductory ceremony of a pūjā and also of the erection of a temple.

3. This is the maṇḍala on which the pupil has to throw his flowers (see item 18).

4. The *aṅkurārpaṇam* is done by means of a number of pots into which different kinds of seeds are put, which should sprout; this is a rite which is believed to give well-being (*saṃpatti*) and performed on different occasions, for instance in wedding ceremonies and when a temple is constructed.

5. The kuṇḍas are either pits in the earth constructed with bricks or movable objects of metal. Only some of them are seats of the deities worshipped in a normal ritual. The others are used for special purposes. Thus ŚT notes eight kuṇḍas whereas PT only mentions five of them.

6. The four maṇḍalas have different designs. Though nothing is said about their use it seems probable that one of them is occupied by the teacher and one by the pupil.

7. The sacrificial platform forms part of the greater pavilion mentioned in item 2.

8. The worship of the door is just as the *aṅkurārpaṇam* a common rite.

13. Lying together on a same layer of darbha-grass (a kind of grass used already for cultic purposes in Vedic times) symbolizes the unity between guru and pupil.

16, 17, 19, 21. These rites all aim at purification, dis- and re-integration of the pupil. This seems to point to a certain development of the tantric ritual similar to that of the vedic ritual.[20]

16. The five products of the cow are: milk, curds, butter, urine and faeces; they are considered to be holy.

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[20] Cf. e.g. Hoens, *Śānti* p. 27, 115f.

17. The six paths are on the level of the words *varṇa*, *mantra* and *pada* and on the level of the objectivation caused by the words *kalā*, *tattva* and *bhuvana*. (See further on (page 100) and cf. Padoux, *Parole* p. 261, 263). According to the commentary on PT V, 118 the *adhvaśodhana* can be short or long (*saṃkṣepato vistarato vā*).

18. The spot of the maṇḍala on which the flowers fall down symbolizes a certain deity. The pupil from then on has to worship that deity till the next dīkṣā. He or she is his iṣṭadevatā.

A comparison with two important scriptures of the Kashmir Śaiva school, the Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta (TĀ) and of the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra, the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā (AS) leads to the following remark : ŚT, TA and AS have much in common but, whereas TĀ does not give much attention to the different purification rites of the pupil, AS has elaborate rites on this subject, which however are partly different from those described in ŚT. For instance AS speaks of three threads of different colours representing *māyā*, wound round the pupil. Whereas according to ŚT and TĀ the pupil has to throw a handful of flowers only, AS mentions a flower, a pearl, a piece of coral and a coin.

22. The giving of the vidyā or mantra which is whispered into the pupil's right ear is one of the central elements of the dīkṣā. According to PT VI, 20 and 21 the pupil should recite the mantra a hundred times. After having mentioned the vidyā TĀ XV, 26 in deviation from ŚT records the following rites effecting a certain identification between Śiva and the pupil : the guru worships with his left hand a glowing mantra maṇḍala, the essence of all paths, which is on his right hand (= Śiva). Then he imposes it on the head of the pupil, on whose body all the six paths have been projected. The teacher touches the different parts of the pupil's body with his right hand.

The meaning of the kriyā dīkṣā

A few remarks on the ritual mentioned do not seem to be out of place. Many rites consist of the preparation of the sites of the dīkṣā (1, 3, 5, 6, 14); then there is a rite for well-being, the purification and temporary deification of the guru (7, 9), the purification and temporary deification of the pupil (11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 21), the worshipping of the god (8, 10, 15), and the union of the ācārya and the pupil (17, 23).

More specific rites of the kriyādīkṣā are : 1. the pupil gets an iṣṭadevatā by throwing flowers blindfolded in the direction of a pot on the maṇḍala (18); 2. the pupil receives a vidyā or a mantra from his guru and thereby is qualified to receive instruction in mantra.

Other dīkṣās

The older śāktatantras do not mention other forms of kriyādīkṣā; only KT (XIV, 67ff.) knows of a kaulikadīkṣā for the Kaulas only. After ritual worship the pupil is introduced into the closed community of the kula (*kulacakra*) and is qualified for the pūjā with the five M's.

The Śaivāgamas and the Vaiṣṇavasaṃhitās know two kriyādīkṣās:

A. the *samayadīkṣā*, the dīkṣā which includes a *samaya*: a covenant between the guru and the pupil, who is now called samayin, with a number of rules the pupil has to follow, and

B. the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* leading to complete liberation of the bonds of existence (TA XV and XVI; ISP III, 16, 20; NT IV gives the nirvāṇadīkṣā only). The course of the ritual is the following: the preparations of the site of the dīkṣā and the purification and the temporary deification of the ācarya and the pupil are similar to the rites of the lower kriyādīkṣā (see page 80f.), even among Śrī Vaiṣṇavas in modern times (Rangachari, Śrī Vaishnava Brahmans, 101-102). The main rites which the pupil has to pass through are:

1. the purification of the six adhvans by means of oblations (TĀ XVI; ISP III, Rangachari, Śrī Vaishnava Brahmans, 113, 159ff.). In this way the pupil is purified and temporarily deified.

2. Threads which represent the pāśas are fastened to the pupil's body from the haircrest to his toes. Then the mind of the pupil is called into these threads in order to identify him with them. The guru meditates upon the several lives of the pupil. Then the threads are cut into pieces and thrown into the fire. In this way the pupil is liberated from the pāśas ISP III, 16; 20). Rangachari describes a somewhat different rite: A string consisting of three threads of different colours representing the three guṇas is twined round the pupil's body twenty-five times (that is the 25 tattvas). Then the string is cut into pieces, the ācārya must imagine the pupil to be burnt down (25 tattva ghee oblations are sacrificed into the fire) The guru repeats the 25 tattva mantras in the order of creation (*sṛṣṭikrama*). Then the pupil's body is aspersed by means of water with the *mūlamantra*. In this way the pupil has died and is reborn.

3. The pupil obtains his new iṣṭadevatā and name in a rite similar to the lower kriyā (see page 81).

4. The guru by means of yoga places the pupil into the *Śivapada* (the abode of Śiva) (ISP III, 16, 20).

In TĀ XV, 23ff. those to whom the nirvāṇadīkṣā has been conferred are of two kinds: the *sādhaka*[21] desiring enjoyment (*bhukti*) and the *putraka*,

[21] Cf. Brunner, BEFEO 1974, 136ff.

desiring liberation (*mukti*). The sādhakas again are of two types : a) they who follow the rules of Śiva (*śivadharmin*) because they do not take part in the ordinary activities of the world. SvT IV 83, 84 gives the following characteristics of the Śivadharmin : "He whose adhvans have been purified by the Śivamantra and who is determined to the perfection of mantra (*mantrasādhana*)". In this way he becomes a Śivasādhaka; b) they who follow the rules of the world (*lokadharmin*) because they long for results, being devoted to gather good deeds and to avoid evil deeds. The *putrakas* also are of two types : a) they who are "without seed" (*nirbīja*) : "without rules of conduct". They are the children, the unfit, the elder people, those who stick to their own property, the sick and so on, and b) they who "have seed" (*sabīja*) : "having rules of conduct" (*samaya*) : the people who have common sense and are able to stand fatigue and fast and are obliged to follow the various particular rules given by the ācārya. ŚT distinguishes four kinds of dīkṣā :

a) *kriyāvatī* (IV, 3; III, IV, V up to 115).
b) *varṇamayī* (IV, 3; V, 116-121 a).
c) *kalāvatī* (IV, 3; V, 121 b-126).
d) *vedhamayī* (IV, 3; V, 127-140).

a) The kriyāvatī (or kriyā) whose ritual has been dealt with is the dīkṣā in which a maṇḍapa, a kuṇḍa and pots are used and which gives "success of everything" (*sarvasamṛddhi*) or "the accomplishment of one's own wishes" (*nijeṣṭasiddhi*) (PT VI, 123).

b) The *varṇamayī* is the dīkṣā of the letters. The teacher applies the letters to the pupil's body; according to KT XIV, 42 the dīkṣā can be performed with 42 *akṣara*, 50 *varṇa* or 62 *lipi*,[22] then he takes them together in reversed order (destruction of the pupil's body). The deified guru identifies himself with the pupil and unites his mind with the Paramātman; out of the Paramātman the guru again produces the varṇas and applies them on the pupil's body. In this way "the state of a deity consisting of supreme bliss arises" (*jāyate devatābhāvaḥ parānandamayaḥ*). This dīkṣā bestows higher consciousness (*saṃvid*). (See KT XIV, 42-45).

c) The kalāvatī, the dīkṣā of the five Kalās, special kinds of energy (*śaktayaḥ*). There are six kinds of them (see page 100). By a process of yoga the teacher penetrates the body of the pupil and in this way he gathers the *nivṛtti* (because the emanation comes to a stop) from the footsole up to the knee, the *pratiṣṭhā* (since the tattvas stay there together) from the knee up to the navel, the *vidyā* (since here there is a higher

[22] See p. 110.

form of consciousness) from the navel up to the throat, the *śānti* (since here the waves which give birth to the five harnesses (*kañcuka*) which cover the Self come to rest) from the throat up to the eyebrow and the *śāntyatīta* (beyond *śānti*, the limiting energy of Śiva united with Śakti) from the eyebrow up to the haircrest, and unites them with Śiva. In this way the pupil is reintegrated in Śiva, and therefore the dīkṣā gives the divine state (*divyabhāvapradāyinī*). From the results obtained by the varṇa- and kalādīkṣā it is obvious that they belong to the higher ones (cf. KT XIV 46-52,[23] also TBS 104).

d) The highest form of dīkṣā is the *vedhamayī*, the dīkṣā of the penetration (*vedha*). It liberates the pupil from the saṃsāra (*saṃsārapramocinī*) (127) and gives divine awakening (*divyabodha*) and understanding of all things (*sarvasaṃvid*) (140).

The process is the following:

1. The guru meditates on Devī (*Śivaśakti*) in the *mūlādhāra* of the pupil. She is pure consciousness (*cetanamātravigrahā*), beaming like a million flashes of lightning. The Śakti having split the ṣaṭcakra, the six cakras, goes up through the central duct of the breath (*suṣumṇā*) to Paraśiva.

2. The guru takes together the letters *va*, *śa*, *ṣa*, *sa* in the lotus seat and in Brahmā; having united him with the *svādhiṣṭhāna* (lotus with six petals with the letters *ba*, *bha*, *ma*, *ya*, *ra* and *la*) he penetrates the *svādhiṣṭhāna*.

3. The guru takes together *ba* up to *la* in Viṣṇu and unites him with the *maṇipūra* (the navel-lotus, with ten petals, with the letters *ḍa*, *ḍha*, *ṇa*, *ta*, *tha*, *da*, *dha*, *na*, *pa*, *pha*) and he penetrates the *maṇipūra*.

4. The guru takes together these ten letters in Rudra and unites him with the *anāhata*, the heart-lotus with the letters *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *gha*, *ṅa*, *ca*, *cha*, *ja*, *jha*, *na*, *ṭa* and *ṭha* and he penetreates the *anāhata*.

5. The guru takes these letters together in Īśvara and unites him with the *viśuddhacakra* or *asurāndhaka*, the throat-lotus with sixteen petals, and with *a*, *ā*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*, *ṛ*, *ṝ*, *ḷ*, *ḹ*, *e*, *ai*, *o*, *au*, *aṃ*, *aḥ*, and he penetrates this cakra.

6. He takes together these vowels in Sadāśiva and unites him with the *ājñācakra*, the eyebrow-lotus, with two petals and the letters *ha* and *kṣa* and he penetrates the cakra.

7. The guru takes these two letters together in the *bindu* (*Śiva*) and unites him with the *kalā* (= *mantrakalā* or *nirodhinī*; cf. Padoux, *Parole*, p. 91).

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[23] KT mentions three forms of this dīkṣā: a) with 38 kalā; b) with 50 kalā; c) through *tattvanyāsa*.

8. The guru unites the *kalā* with the *nāda*.[24]

9. The guru unites the *nāda* with the *nādānta* (having the nāda as end).

10. The guru unites the *nādānta* with the *unmanī*, the supreme transcendent energy, one with Śiva and quasi-identical with him (NT. XXI, 60).

11. The guru unites the *unmanī* with *Vidruvaktrāntare*(?) who is transferred to the face of the pupil and then to the guru. By this process the pupil whose bonds have been cut descends in Paramaśiva; he becomes Śiva in person (139).

KT XIV, 57-66 describes the *manodīkṣā* (*mānasadīkṣā* BS 106, 107) which has a place similar to the *vedhamayī* in the ŚT. It has two different forms, a lower and a higher one. The first is called "sharp" (*tīvrā*) and consists of the purification, by means of yoga, of the six paths by the guru. The six paths here are the *bhuvana* from the footsole up to the knee, the *tattva* from the knee up to the navel, the *kalā* from the navel up to the heart, the *varṇa* from the heart up to the throat, the *pada* from the throat up to the palate and the *mantra* from the palate up to the haircrest. In this way the pupil immediately becomes free from the bonds (*pāśas*) of existence and will reach liberation (*mukti*).

The second form of *manodīkṣā* is called "the sharpest one (*tīvratarā*) in which the pupil becomes free from the evil of existence" (*chinnapāpaḥ*) simply by meditation of the guru (*smṛtamātrataḥ*). Further characteristics of this dīkṣā are: the pupil cannot utter his happiness (*na śaknoti tat sukhaṃ vaktum*); he is Śiva in person and will not participate in rebirths, being liberated from the bonds of becoming.

KT describes six states of the *vedha*: bliss, tembling, uprising, turning around, sleep and fainting (64). It is not surprising that he falls down on the ground (*bhūmau patati*) (61).

KT mentions still other forms of dīkṣā:

1. *Sparśadīkṣā* (XIV, 53) (dīkṣā by touching). Here the teacher projects Śiva on his hand by concentration and mutters the *mūlāṅgamālinī* i.e. a number of mantras regarding the heart, the head, the haircrest, the *kavaca* and the *astra* (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 271) and then touches the body of the pupil. This rite has some similarity with that of the *samayadīkṣā* in TA XV, 26.

2. A somewhat higher form of dīkṣā is the *vāgdīkṣā* (the dīkṣā of speech) (KT XIV, 54, 55). Having concentrated the acquired (*vitta*) in the essence (*tattva*) the guru speaks the connecting mantras which are powerful by the highest tattva (Śiva). The result of this dīkṣā has not been recorded.

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[24] See p. 92f.

3. The next dīkṣā is the *dṛkdīkṣā* (the dīkṣā by looking) (KT XIV 55, 56). The guru points in concentration his closed eyes in the direction of the pupil while his mind is calm in the highest tattva (Śiva). By this "look" true insight immediately arises (*sadyaḥ sañjāyate jñānam*). The comparison of the sparśadīkṣā with a bird which teaches the young ones to fly step by step; the comparison of the dṛkdīkṣā with a fish which teaches the young ones by means of the eyes only and the comparison of the manodīkṣā with a tortoise which teaches its young by concentration only (KT XIV, 38) makes it clear that the manodīkṣā is superior to the dṛkdīkṣā whereas both are superior to the *sparśadīkṣā*. KT XIV, 40 gives still another list of dīkṣās: 1. *samaya-*, 2. *viśeṣa-*, 3. *sādhaka-*, 4. *putraka-*, 5. *vedhaka-*, 6. *pūrṇa-*, 7. *ācārya-* and 8. *nirvāṇa-*.

Abhiṣeka. Now the same tantra XIV, 69-77 speaks about abhiṣeka (consecration), a ceremony which is already known in ancient India as part of the rājasūya, the consecration of the king (Heesterman, *Royal Consecration*, p. 114ff.). The abhiṣeka runs as follows (TT II, 59) : the teacher makes a cakra or maṇḍala and places a pot (*kumbha*) or a conch on it. Then he fills the *kumbha* with water and asperses the pupil while muttering a mantra. ŚST VI, 21ff. says that for abhiṣeka a favourable time and site are required. There a maṇḍapa should be erected in which the *Sarvatobhadracakra* should be designed. The guru should asperse a thousand times with a mantra for ṣoḍhānyāsa[25] and with the vidyā of the main deity. The ceremony should be accompanied by singing, dancing and acting of yoginīs (female yogins). According to VI, 104 one also can perform an abhiṣeka when there is a favourable position of the planets and in case of danger of war or sorcery. By using water brought in connection with Soma, Sūrya and Agni one can obtain appeasement (*śānti*) for all kinds of trouble (*duḥkha*) (114). In the passage just mentioned KT speaks of 1. the *ācārya-*, 2. the *samayi-*, 3. the *sādhaka-*, 4. the *putraka-*, 5. the *vedhaka-*, 6. the *pūrṇa-abhiṣeka*

Thus immediately after the kriyādīkṣā there is an abhiṣeka by which the pupil becomes *samaya* (or *samayin*), which means that the pupil should stick to certain rules of ritual and conduct and which authorizes the pupil to receive instruction in mantras and to perform the pūjā at home. By means of a *viśeṣa-*(*samaya*, SvT IV, 89) *abhiṣeka* the pupil obtains a special set of rules for certain special purposes. Now the dīkṣā can — as was already the case in Vedic India[26] — be performed in order to realize wordly ambitions, as for instance wealth, or superiority over enemies.

[25] See p. 136f.

[26] Gonda, *Change* p. 321.

As has been mentioned before, a higher form of kriyādīkṣā is the nirvāṇadīkṣā. The pupil becomes a *putra(ka)* or *putrikā*. By means of a more complicated abhiṣeka (60ff), the *pūrṇābhiṣeka* (6), the pupil either becomes a *sādhaka* (1) or an *ācārya* (3). According to NT V, 4a the sādhaka desires perfection (*siddhi*) in *mantrasādhana*.[27] Thus he becomes a specialist in certain mantras by means of which he can obtain different powers such as flying through the air, the power of Īśvara or of Bhuvaneśvara. The ācārya of course is entitled to initiate pupils and to perform the pūjā in the temple.[28] Finally the pupil becomes a *vedhaka* (5) by means of the *vedha(mayī)dīkṣā*. So we have found that of the eight forms of dīkṣā five are also called abhiṣeka. Now a peculiar thing is that neither the ŚT nor the PT have a separate chapter on abhiṣeka; but they do mention a kind of abhiṣeka as part of the kriyādīkṣā (St V, 106, cf. PT. VI, 110). Did not certain schools in Tantrism know a separate rite of abhiṣeka?

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[27] Cf. Brunner *lc*.

[28] Cf. Diehl, *Instrument* pp. 51, 52 notes.

CHAPTER FOUR

MANTRA AND OTHER CONSTITUENTS OF TANTRIC PRACTICE

Sound and word in older Hinduīsm

In no human civilization speculation on sound and word has played such a lasting and important role as in the Indian culture. In order to understand the place and the meaning of word and mantra in Śāktism and Tantrism a short survey of the earlier developments of this subject seems appropriate. Owing to the defectiveness of the material available it is impossible to trace a continuous development of the relevant matter from the Vedas up to the Tantras. We can only speak of some stepping-stones here and there (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 17).

1. In ṚV I, 67, 4 we already read that the wise men found the hidden Agni "when they recited the mantras formed in their heart" (*hṛdā yat taṣṭān mantrān aśaṃsan*). And Agni supported heaven by means of "truthful mantras" (*mantrebhiḥ satyaiḥ*). ṚV I, 72,6 informs us of the time that those worthy of worship have found "the three times seven secret words" (*triḥ sapta guhyāni padā*; *pada* : footprint, here has a special meaning); "hidden at you(r place = Agni's), they guard the immortal one (Agni) by means of them (the secret words)". Thus certain words are so powerful that they can even check the mighty gods. No wonder that Vāc, Voice or Speech, is already in the Ṛgveda considered to be a goddess (see VII, 100, 11). This reference makes it further clear that Vāc not only signifies the articulated human speech but also the sounds made by all kinds of animals. According to verse 10 she gives fourfold food and milk and according to ṚV I, 164, 45 Vāc is measured in four parts; three parts of her are secret (*guhā triṇi*); men speak the fourth part (*turiyaṃ vāco manuṣyā vadanti*). Geldner refers in Ṛgveda I, 164, 45 note to a similar statement about the Puruṣa (ṚV X, 90, 3). If this reference is correct it means that three parts of Vāc belong to the world of the gods. In ṚV. X, 114, 8 Vāc is related to Brahman, the absolute: "as far as Brahman has been spread so far Vāc has been spread" (*yāvad brahma viṣṭhitaṃ tāvati vāk*). Finally the hymn ṚV X, 125 is wholly devoted to Vāc. In this hymn she says: "I support (*bibharmi*) Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra and Agni, the two Aśvins, the impetuous Soma, Tvaṣṭṛ and Pūṣan, Bhaga (2,3). By me one eats food; who sees, who breathes, who hears the spoken (words) does this by me (4). I am

blowing like the wind reaching (*ārabhamānā*) the worlds beyond heaven and earth; I have mightily become so great" (*etāvatī mahinā babhūva*, 8). Thus Vāc in this case is mightier than the most important deities. All creatures are dependent on her. Her power is reaching further than earth and heaven. Brahman only seems to be superior to her. From all this it can be concluded that the supreme power of word and mantra in Śāktism and Tantrism has its roots in the Ṛgveda-saṃhitā.[1]

2. In the Atharvaveda (AV) we find several examples of hymns containing certain words which are often repeated in order to strengthen their powerful effect. Only a short hymn may be mentioned here: AV V, 9, 1-6: "to heaven hail! (*dive svāhā*); to earth hail; to atmosphere hail (twice); to heaven hail; to earth hail". The repetition of mantras is a well-known practice also in Tantrism.

3. Both in the ṚV and the oldest Upaniṣads we already find clear traces of a connection between mind and speech, between breath and speech and between mind, breath and speech. A few references may suffice: ṚV X, 71,2 says that "the wise create speech (*Vāc*) by the mind (*manas*); and X, 181, 2: "meditating with their mind (*manas*) the old wise men (Vaśiṣṭha and Bharadvāja) found the first sacrificial formulas (*yajus*)". According to ChU VII, 3,1 mind (*manas*) is greater than speech. For just as the closed fist holds two fruits so does the mind hold speech and name. .The same Upaniṣad (I, 5,3) says: one should meditate on breath in the mouth (*mukhyaḥ prāṇaḥ*) as the udgītha (There is a trend of linking various concepts by means of a central structural principle like that of number; like the thread on which the pearls of a necklace are strung) "for it is continually sounding Oṃ" (*om iti hy eṣa svarann eti*). This reference shows at the same time the great importance of *oṃ* already in the period of the earliest Upaniṣads (cf. also ChU I, 4 and IX, 23,2). In BĀU I, 5, 3-7 it is said that Prajāpati made for himself mind, speech and breath (*mano vācaṃ prāṇam*). Whatever sound there is, it is just speech (*yah kaś ca śabdo*[2] *vāg eva sā*) verily the self consists of speech, mind and breath. These are the three worlds: speech is this world, mind is the atmospheric world, breath is that world (heaven). The same are the three Vedas: speech verily is the Ṛgveda, mind is the Yajurveda; breath is the Sāmaveda. They also are father, mother and offspring. Mind verily is the father, speech is the mother, breath is the off-

[1] On *vāc* see also J. Gonda, *The vision of the Vedic poets*, The Hague 1963, *passim*; B. Essers, *Vāc*, Thesis Groningen 1952.

[2] *Śabda* often has the meaning of *sound* or *word*.

spring. These statements show the strong connection between mind, breath and speech, a topic that is well known in Tantrism.

4. ṚV I, 164, 39 runs as follows: "He who does not know the syllable (*akṣara*) of Ṛc, the seat of all the gods in the highest space; what can he begin with the Ṛc?" If the akṣara of Ṛc is *Oṃ*, this text is related to JB I where *Oṃ* is called the essence (*rasa*) of the world and to ChU II, 23, 2 and 3: "He (Prajāpati) heated them (the worlds): out of them issued the threefold knowledge. He heated them...out of them issued these syllables: *bhūr*, *bhuvaḥ*, *svar*; he heated them and out of them issued the syllable *auṃ*. As all leaves are held together by a stalk, so is all speech held together by *auṃ*" (*auṃkāreṇa sarvā vāk saṃtṛṇṇā*). "Verily the all is this syllabe *auṃ*" (*auṃkāra evedaṃ sarvam*). The tantric speculations about *Oṃ* (*Auṃ*) as the akṣara, the essence of all existing syllables, seem to be well prepared in Vedic literature.

5. A next important stepping-stone from the Veda to Śāktism is the Mahābhāṣya by Patañjali. According to Ruegg this author not only taught the eternity of sound (*śabda*) but also that it is the mental base of the signification. The signifying sound (*dhvani*) is a quality of the eternal sound (*śabdaguṇa*). As the base of signification *śabda* is called *sphoṭa* (bursting) which as the base of signification has a certain duration; an increase in intensity (*vṛddhi*) is due to *dhvani*.

6. The last stepping-stone is the Brahmakāṇḍa of the Vākyapadīya by Bhartṛhari (beginning of the sixth century A.D.). According to this author Brahman is the essence of the sound (*śabdatattva*) with which sphoṭa is identical. VP 1,2: "Though not being different Brahman acts as if he were different from his energies (*śaktayaḥ*). The forms (*ākāra*) or transformations (*vikāra*) are not real; they are illusive only (*vivarta*)". Bhartṛhari assumes two different sphoṭas: 1. the internal (*abhyantara*) revealing meaning at the level of the *madhyamā vāc* (speech accompanied by subtle breath) and 2. the external (*bāhya*) at the level of the *vaikharī vāc* (the word as it is spoken). According to him *dhvani* = *nāda* = signifying sound. The difference between *nāda* and *sphoṭa* is compared to the changes caused by the movements of the water affecting an image which is reflected in that water (VP 1,50). Finally Bhartṛhari already distinguishes three levels of speech: 1. the first and highest level is that of *paśyantī* (the level of consciousness). 2. *madhyamā* and 3. *vaikharī* (both mentioned earlier). Much of what has just been described we shall find again in dealing with the Śākta theories of word and mantra.

7. A few words must be said about the importance of the correct utterance of sacred words or texts when they were used in the ritual or studied. Although many scholars have written about it, among them Bharati (*Tantric Tradition*, p. 122), Chakravarti (*Linguistic Speculations*, p. 102) and Gonda (*Mantra*, p. 270), only few references to older Indian texts can be given. At the end of the full and new moon sacrifice some gifts are given with the purpose of repairing the mistakes made during the sacrifice. One of these gifts is accompanied by the following texts (BŚS 1, 21 = ĀpŚS 3, 11, 2 = HirŚS 2,6): "Everything we neglected in formulae or in action during this sacrifice (HirŚS : ritual) that I appease by means of this oblation". Thus the correct recitation of the ritual words is important. Yāska (*Nirukta* I, 15) writes when dealing with Vedic mantras : "they are fixed as to the combination of words (*niyatavācoyuktayaḥ*) and fixed as to the order of words" (*niyatānupūrvyāḥ*). According to Yāska a mantra consists of a combination of certain words and the order in which these words are put is a fixed one; both should not be changed. The most elaborate reference to the subject under discussion however is TU I, 2 which says : "We shall expound the pronunciation, the letters, the intonation, the prosodial instant, the stress, the harmony and the linking. Thus has been declared the study of pronunciation (*śikṣāṃ vyākhyasyāmaḥ.varṇas svaraḥ mātrā balaṃ sāma santāna ity uktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ*). Van Boetzelaer in his translation of Sureśvara's TUBh I, 52-53 says : "*Varṇa* (is) the sound "*a*" etc., so *svara* the acutely accented vowel etc.; the prosodial instants (*mātrā*) (are) long, short (or) prolated. *Balam* is declared (to be) stress. *Sāman* (is) the mutual harmony of vowels, (i.e.) the avoidance of unevenness. *Santāna* (is) the linking. Thus the science of pronunciation is expounded." Thus the *śikṣā*, the science of proper pronunciation of the Vedic texts, one of the six Vedāṅgas (the auxiliary sciences of the Veda) gives very detailed instruction about the recitation of the ancient sacred texts.

8. *Phonic Emanation*

One of the most essential traits of Tantrism is its conception of a phonic plane of existence parallel to, and even basic to, the objective world. It is a leading factor in cosmic evolution. The theory of sound and meaning probably originated in the speculation on the sacred syllables, particularly *Oṃ*, which, as we saw, originated in the Veda and continues to be the main focus of Tantric sound symbolism. The first stages of phonic emanation are nothing else than mystic primordial constituents of *Oṃ*. The first of them is *nāda*, paraphrased by Padoux (in French) as "first sonorous resonance (of the

Parā Vāc, see below), an extremely subtle state of pure phonic energy" (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 51). According to the NT (21,62f.), it is the "bursting" (*sphoṭa*) in sound form emanating from Śiva. But later texts usually derive it from Śakti as a consequence of her contact with Śiva (NT 21, 62f.; KKV 9). It may be equated with Kuṇḍalinī; it is symbolized by the crescent (Woodroffe, *Ś. Ś.*, p. 397).

Then comes the bindu, an extremely concentrated ambrosial "drop" of the pure primordial speech. It is symbolized by a dot or the full moon. Bindu and Nāda are usually treated in combination as the decisive factor in the evolution of speech and reality. The subject is complicated intensely by the differences in thought and presentation found in the sources as well as with modern authors. In a short survey it seems the best way to take the system presented by the very influential ŚT (I,7ff.) as a base. Its author assumes an initial triad which consists of Śiva (the Bindu), Śakti (the Bīja) and their union (not mentioned by name, but its effect or product is called the Nāda). This triad is called a "threefold Bindu", identical with the Supreme Śakti. In the first stage, it causes to emanate triads of śaktis and male deities:

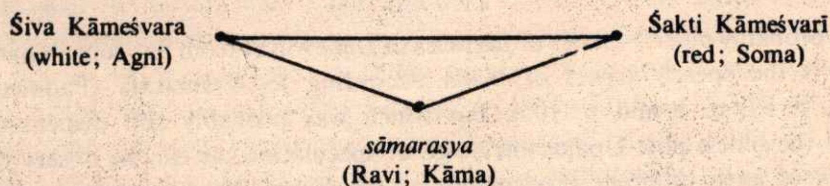
Śiva (bindu)	*Śakti (bija)*	*Their union (→ nāda)*
Raudrī	Vāmā	Jyeṣṭhā
Icchā	Kriyā	Jñāna
Rudra	Brahmā	Viṣṇu
Agni (fire)	Soma (moon)	Sūrya (sun)

In addition to this evolutionary series, there is a second one according to which the division of the supreme Bindu produces Rava "sound" which is Śabdabrahman, "phonic (aspect of) Brahman", i.e. the principle of intelligence in audible form. In the human microcosm it is manifested as Kuṇḍalinī. A third, "mythological", series originating from Śiva-Bindu is: Sadāśiva — Īśvara — Rudra — Viṣṇu — Brahmā.

The word Bindu can thus stand for different things. Its extreme versatility is ably discussed by Padoux (*Parole*, p. 93ff.; cf. also Kaviraj, *Śāktadṛṣṭi*, p. 77). For instance in Tantric code language, bindu can also be used for *amṛta* "fluid of immortality" and for sperma. When the YHT (1, 10f.) describes Bindu as "of the nature of the Void, being the supreme essence of illumination" etc., it obviously describes the Bindu which is Śiva. Amṛtānanda, while commenting on this place, declares this to be the case, but adds the remark that there is a second bindu which is of the nature of Soma and Agni, the Ravi (Sun) called Kāma the nature of which is the blissful union (*sāmarasya*) of Śiva and Śakti. This is what the

YHT itself (1,12) styles the Baindavacakra "Orbit of the Bindu" which forms the central triangle (with its point downwards) of the Śrīcakra. It is also called Baindavāsana "Seat of the Bindu", i.e. Śiva and Śakti united on the dead body of Sadāśiva (the inactive category of Sadāśiva) as a couch (YHT 1, 14 and comm.). The name Ravi may have been prompted by two factors: a. The Vedic triad Agni – Soma – Sūrya (fire, fluid, sun); b. the term Rava "sound" used in a comparable position as a synonym for Nāda in the ŚT (1, 7ff., see above).

A further step is that the twofold Bindu, Śakti – Śiva, is characterized by both Amṛtānanda and Rāghavabhaṭṭa in the mentioned passages of the YHT and the ŚT by the colours white and red, suggestive of semen and what is usually called menstrual flux, the two factors of reproduction in Hindu (including Tantric) embryology.[3] The triad Śiva – Śakti – Nāda obtained the name Kāmakalā "Divine particle (manifesting itself as) Desire", personified as Tripurasundarī (JT 10, 8); in this context, Śiva and Śakti are called Kāmeśvara and Kāmeśvarī. The Kāmakalā symbolizes the creative union of the primeval parental pair; a pulsating cosmic atom with two nuclei graphically represented by a white and red dot which automatically produce a third point of gravity. This situation is often represented in graphical form as a triangle. This can be done in two ways: with the point upwards or downwards. The second variety which expresses the initial cosmic dynamism would look like this:



A final step is taken when this triad is enriched with a fourth element so as to constitute the graphic representation of the most potent parts of Devī's mystical body (also in this context she is called Kāmakalā or Tripurasundarī): her face, two breasts (the white and red bindu) and womb. They are represented by the letter *ī* written in an older form akin to the Newarī sign, or by the *ha* (the "womb" is often called *hārdhakalā* "the particle consisting of half the *ha*", i.e. its lower part), as follows:

[3] R. F. G. Müller, *Altindische Embryologie*, Leipzig 1955, p. 15f., points out that *ārtava* "the female stuff of reproduction", although often called *śoṇita* "blood" is not to be confounded with the menstrual flow.

 ī ह ha

According to more recent authorities, this is only the gross form of the Kāmakalā. The subtle form would be the Kuṇḍalinī and the supreme form the "mantra body" with the Vedas as its main constituent (Rāmeśvara on PKS 5,16; Woodroffe, *Analysis of TT*, p. 134ff. On the fourfold Kāmakalā, cf. NST 1, 185f.; ŚST 1, 3, 87f. etc.).

The Kāmakalā is identical with the Akatha triangle, the three sides of which are the three Śaktis, the three stages of evolution of speech (Paśyantī etc.) and three sections of the alphabet. The fourth or "womb" element corresponds ~~to the Parā Vāc or initial stage of speech~~ identical with the Supreme Śakti (Ambikā). There is a further correspondence with the mystic centres in the body. Here, we present the system as given in the YHT (1,36ff.), completed from Rāghavabhaṭṭa's comm. on ŚT 1,110 (see also KKV 22-24; Padoux, *Parole*, p. 115ff.):

Goddess	*Form of Śakti*	*Stage of Speech*	*Place in Body*
Ambikā		Parā	Mūlādhāra
Vāmā	Icchā	Paśyantī	Svādhiṣṭhāna
Jyeṣṭhā	Jñāna	Madhyamā	Hṛdaya (heart)
Raudrī	Kriyā	Vaikharī	Kaṇṭha (throat) or Mukha (face)

The — probably older — series of particles of *Oṃ* evolves from Śabdabrahman which is the speech aspect of Nāda according to Kṣemarāja (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 87, n. 1 and p. 105), but which was probably still dispensed with in the oldest post-Upaniṣadic stage of speculation, as can be observed in texts of such different provenance as the Siddhāntaśikhopaniṣad, the Śiva Pur. (p. 761) and the Jñānasiddhānta (Soebadio, p. 25 and 51). The Kashmir Āgamas (SvT, NT), the Trika and the ŚT, as well as some later authors, developed this system still further; it is applicable on the microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic plane. We refer to the tables given by Padoux (*Parole*, p. 105 and 253), in which, however, the relative position of the stages is apt to be interpreted too boldly by an uncautious reader.

9. *The four stages of phonic emanation*

We now concentrate on the speculation about the evolution of the alphabet. All letters are in Śiva as *śabdarāśi*: the mass of sounds in an

eminent and undifferentiated way. According to ŚT, I, 108f. there is an evolutionary series of speech from Śabdabrahman (cf p. 94) to Parā Vāk or Parā Śakti.[4] It is identical with Cit: (supreme) consciousness and is the springwell and the primary source of everything. In the human body it is situated in the *mūlādhāra cakra*. "It is at the same time the germinal speech in which neither any differentiation nor sound appear, where the vibration (*spanda*) of the consciousness is hardly perceptible, at the same time containing everything which will come into existence" (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 145). Parā Vāk is also identical with the mantra *AHAM* ("I") which consists of *M*, the condensed presence (the *bindu*); of the energy or of the manifestation *HA* in the transcendent *A* (PTV, 6). Now the mass of sounds is projected on the supreme-non-supreme energy (*parāparā*): the *Paśyantī vāk* which reflects it. In the human body Paśyantī is in the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*. Then begins the emanation of the letters as pure energy and not as articulated and manifested (*sphuṭa*) letters. It is called *mātṛkā* (mother) or *pūrvamālinī* (the primary lady of the garland). It is in this context that the expression *varṇamālā*, the garland of letters, *id est* the whole series of fifty letters has to be understood (cf. ŚT I, 110 "In this way Kuṇḍalī produces the garland of letters (the alphabets consisting of 42 (letters) from A up to SA" (*krameṇānena sṛjati kuṇḍalī varṇamālikām akārādisakārāntāṃ dvicatvāriṃśadātmikām*). This varṇamalā also is the universe.

LT XX 32, 33: The mātṛkā is a projection of Viṣṇuśakti. It is said that like Viṣṇu the mātṛkā also has fifty śaktis resting in it and making up a garland of letters (*mātṛkāṃ varṇamālinīm*) (cf. Gupta, 112). Paśyantī is identical in nature with Parā Vāk but it has not its characteristics of transcendence and omnipresence. At this level according to TĀ III, 236 there arises in the consciousness a desire to see. There still is no question of the world of objects (*vācya*) but a tendency to it. According to Abhinavagupta there also is a grosser form of Paśyantī namely that of sonic vibration. At the same moment the śabdarāśi is in a different way reflected in the Madhyamā vāk and called the *uttaramālinī* or *mālinī*. In the human body it is situated in the Hṛdaya cakra. At this level the stage of indifferentiation has been left. Now also the difference between the signifying word (*vācaka*) and the signified object (*vācya*) comes into existence. It is the moment in which the world of objects, the universe truly is born out of speech and in it (PVT, p. 5). It is no longer the level of consciousness but that of interior language.

After this the sounds appear at the level of the lower (*aparā*) energy and

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[4] In the pre-tantric period one regarded *Paśyanti* as the highest form of Speech (see p. 92).

speech, the level of the *Vaikharī vāk* which is that of common speech. In the human body *Vaikharī* is situated in the mouth (cf. commentary on ŚT I, 109). This is the level at which the differentiation is completely manifest. The vācaka and the vācya are now completely distinguished. The *Kriyāśakti* dominates at the level of *Vaikharī vāk* (PTV, p. ɔ).

10. *The origin of the alphabet*

During the emanation first arise the sixteen letters *A* up to *AḤ* (*visarga*) called *śakti* or *kalā* as aspects of the divine transcendence (cf. PT III, 1ff., ŚT II, 19ff. and LT XIX, 1-19). "Without the vowels the manifestation of the other(s) (letters), of the consonants does not arise" (*vinā svarais tu nānyeṣāṃ jāyate vyaktir añjasā*). "People therefore proclaim the letters to consist of Śiva and Śakti (*śivaśaktimayān prāhus tasmād varṇān maniṣiṇaḥ*).

The *A* is the omnipresent Citśakti and the source of all letters. Ā = A+A = Śiva+Śakti in inseparable union (*yāmala*) in a state of bliss (*ānanda*).

I is the Icchāśakti (the power of the will); Ī = Īśāna, the energy of sovereignty.

U, here the desire to manifest the universe, takes the form of the awakening or of the revelation (*unmeṣa*). We have now reached the level of the *Jñānaśakti*.

Ū as symbol of the first six letters together is considered to be the seed (*bija*) of the process of the manifestation of the letters *A* up to *AḤ*.

Ṛ is the manifestation of the Icchāśakti as a stable, not perturbated illumination; Ṝ has not the stability of Ṛ; when this double energy acquires the stability of the earth (*sthairya, niścalatā*) one has Ḷ and Ḹ.

At the level of Ṛ, Ṝ, Ḷ and Ḹ a kind of standstill has come in the internal movement of Śiva towards emanation. At the level of E there is movement again for E = A+I. We have now reached the level of the *Kriyāśakti* (the power of action) and also of the triangle (*trikoṇa*) consisting of the Icchā-, Jñāna- and Kriyāśaktis. In AI is A+E we have already two triangles, since A+A = Ā was the first. Together these triangles form a six-pointed star.

In *O* = *A*+*U* the *Kriyāśakti* is more manifest than in *AI*. In *AU* = *A*+*O* the *Kriyāśakti* has become completely manifested.

Ṃ is the *bindu* (the point) representing Śiva in whom now the fourteen letters as fourteen aspects can be distinguished; nevertheless at the same time he remains the undifferentiated point, the only and beaming source of energy.

Whereas the bindu consists of one single point, *AḤ* (*visarga*) has two points (:). It is the beginning of a new stage of emanation, which at the same time also is a liberation, namely an escape of the breath.

The related *HA* is considered to be a grosser form of the *visarga*.

The consonants (*vyañjana*) from *KA* up to *KṢA* represent a lower stage of emanation : "the vowels are the ultimate cause of all the letters" (*svarā eva sarvavarṇānāṃ mūlakāraṇam*, Jayaratha in his commentary on TA III, 184; cf. PT IV, 7). The vowels are their principle of life (*prāṇa*). They are considered to be the seeds (*bīja*) and the consonants the womb (*yoni*). The consonants are considered to be a condensation (*ghanatā*) of the vowels. The vowels are the signifying items: *vācaka*; the consonants the signified items (*vācya*). Now the gutturals *KA* up to *ṄA* are the results of a condensation of *A*; the palatals *CA* up to *NA* are a condensation of *I*. In a similar way *ṬA* up to *ṆA*, and *TA* up to *NA* have respectively arisen out of *Ṛ* and *Ḷ*; *PA* up to *MA* out of *U*; *YA* out of *I*; *RA* out of *Ṛ*; *LA* out of *Ḷ*; *VA* out of *U+A*. *ŚA*, *ṢA* and *SA* have arisen from *I*, *Ṛ* and *Ḷ* but in a different way, namely not as the result of a union between the energy of the Transcendent and another energy, but they have come forth in an expiratory manner (*uṣman*). Finally the fiftieth letter *KṢA* arose as a combination (*pratyāhāra*) of *KA+SA* which are respectively animated by the transcendent *A* and the *visarga*. In this way KṢA symbolizes the inseparable union of Śiva and Śakti, the source of all letters.

11. *The relation between the consonants and the tattvas (principles)*

The universe consists of thirty-six tattvas. From the gross consonants, (the gutturals), there arose the five elements (*bhūta*) earth, water, wind, fire and atmosphere. From the five palatals arose the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*): the essence of odour, taste, sight, hearing and touching. From the five cerebrals arose the five organs of action (*karmendriya*): speech, sight, movement, excretion and reproduction. From the five dentals arose the five organs of sense (*buddhīndriya*) of odour, taste, sight, hearing and touching. From the five labials arose the *manas*, the *ahaṃkāra*, the *buddhi*, the *prakṛti* and the *puruṣa*. These twenty-five tattva all belong to the manifested world (*aśuddhasṛṣṭi*) which is subjected to illusion and duality.

The three semi-vowels *YA*, *RA*, *LA* gave rise to the existence of the five armours (*kañcuka*), since they cover the Self and impede its original freedom and expansion. They are : 1. attachment (*rāga*), 2. knowing (*vidyā*), limited by the differentiated knowledge, 3. the principle of determination (*kalā*) and 4. time (*kāla*) and 5. restriction (*niyati*) which are included in the first three. Out of *VA* arose *māyā*, illusion. These six tattvas form the pure-

impure manifestation (*śuddhāśuddha*). *ŚA* corresponds to *mahāmāyā* (the great illusion); *ṢA* to the pure knowing (*śuddhavidyā*); *SA* to the Lord (*īśvara*); *HA* to *Sadāśiva* (the "eternal Śiva") and *KṢA* to Śakti (*śuddhasṛṣṭi*). Śiva is the thirty-sixth *tattva*.

12. *The sixfold path of emanation and purification (ṣaḍadhvan)*

When dealing with the dīkṣā the subject of the sixfold path has been touched upon a few times (see p. 81). We have now to deal with it more extensively. The six paths consists of two series of three paths. The first three belong to the sphere of the signifying speech (*vācaka*) and are: *varṇa* (letter) which is the highest (*parā*), *mantra* (aphorism, spell), which is subtle (*sūkṣma*) and *pada* (archetype of spoken words) which is gross (*sthūla*). In the sphere of the signified object (*vācya*) correspond to these three paths: *kalā* (determined energy) (see p. 81) which is the highest of the second triad, *tattva*, dealt with in the preceding section of this chapter, which is subtle (*sūkṣma*) and *bhuvana* (world) which is gross (*sthūla*). A few words should be added about each of these paths. Varṇa corresponds to Śiva's act of becoming conscious in an undifferentiated way of the several forms of energy of the letters. This only means a small perturbation (*prakṣobha*) since the letters appear in their most subtle forms only. We must keep in mind that varṇa can be at the same time: 1. = *śabdarāśi* (see p. 95), 2. = *Parā vāk* or *Paśyantī* (see p. 92) and 3. = *mātṛkā* (see p. 92).

With mantra we are at a more evolved level than that of *varṇa*. One can speak of a certain degree of differentiation but at the same time of non-differentiation. According to Kṣemarāja in his commentary on SvT IV, 103ff. one should in this context think of the following mantras: *LAṂ* in the *nivṛttikalā* (see p. 85), *VAṂ* the *pratiṣṭhākalā*, *RAṂ*, in the *vidyākalā*, *YAṂ* in the *śāntikalā* and *KSAṂ* in the *śāntyatītakalā*.

With *pada* we have definitely reached the level of differentiation. This implies a perturbation (*kṣobha*) in the consciousness of Śiva because it turns to the world of objects. Jayaratha (commentary TĀ XI, 44) explains *pada* in the following way: "since the manifestation falls (*padyate*) and is known (*jñāyate*)". With pada appears temporal succession (*krama*), discursive thinking (*vikalpa*) and mental construction (*kalpana*). Thus pada can be considered to be the archetypes of the spoken letters and words (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 274).

About the number of *padas* there are different statements: according to TĀ XI, 51-53) there are ten of them; SvT IV, 252 distinguishes eighty-one i.e. nine times the letters *oṃ*, *ya*, *va*, *la*, *ma*, *kṣa*, *ra*, *ha* and *ū*, but each time *oṃ* moves one place to the right.

Now we come to the three paths of the world of objects. The highest class of objectivity is represented by the kalā, a higher form of energy which encloses as well as penetrates the *tattva* and the *bhuvana*. The five kalās have been mentioned before (see p. 85f.). Above the śāntyatītakalā is *Parameśvara*, the undifferentiated absolute, the immovable source of the universe. Sometimes he is considered to be the thirty-seventh tattva. (TĀ XI, 21).

The *tattvas* have already been dealt with. They are energies at a somewhat lower level than that of the kalā. According to Kṣemarāja, tattva is that which expands itself (*tananāt tattvam*) which means: which causes the manifestation to appear.

The *bhuvana* are the worlds which can be divided into earthly, heavenly and spiritual worlds. TĀ mentions a number of 108 worlds, SvT IV, 198-200 even counts 224 bhuvanas.[5]

Although these six paths are mentioned separately one should keep in mind that they are all interconnected. Thus there are *tattvas* and *bhuvanas* in the *kalās*, and *padas* and *mantras* in the *varṇas*. This means that the pupil who purifies one path purifies the whole manifestation, all the forms of energy of the other five paths included. The purification is connected with speculations on prāṇa which is identified with Kuṇḍalinī, the human and cosmic energy residing in the abdomen of the human body. By means of certain exercices in which *nyāsa* (application) plays an important part, the *prāṇa* or the *mantra Oṃ* as the Kuṇḍalinī is led upwards to the head where Śiva resides.

In this way the *bhuvanas*, *tattvas*, *kalās*, *padas*, *mantras* and *varṇas* are brought back from the level of manifestation to that of the undifferentiated absolute. By this process of resorption the pupil becomes liberated from the limitations and illusion of this world of manifestation.

13. *What is mantra*?

A mantra is any combination of letters believed to be of divine origin and used in order to evoke divine powers and to realize a communion of man with the divine source and essence of the universe. The difference between Vedic and tantric mantras can be formulated with Renou (EVP VI 11-12) in this way: "The tantric mantra tends to go beyond language into the sphere of silence, whereas the Vedic mantra was beneath language, being evidence of an unfinished semantism" or with Padoux (*Parole*, p. 297; translated) "The Vedic and tantric mantras both richly endow to silence; the unexpressed, the mystery being the result of its unfinished aspect, the

[5] A number of them are mentioned by A. Avalon, *Garland* 252, 253.

true aspect of Brahman, was the most important in the Vedic mantra, whereas the tantric *bījamantra* situated beyond language tends to the highest level of speech, to its source where it still is silence". The tantric mantra communicates an exact consciousness of the universe in order to enable man to acquire the knowledge of the reality and by means of this to save him from the transmigration, the *saṃsāra* (Padoux, *Parole* p. 294). The Indian authors therefore given the following etymology of mantra: (PT V, 2) *mananāt tattvapadasya trāyata iti mantram ucyate*: "by meditation on the place of the (highest) principle he is saved; thus it is called man-tra" and KT (XVII, 54): *mananāt tattvarūpasya devasyāmitatejasaḥ trāyate sarvabhayatas tasmān mantra itīritaḥ*": "by meditation on the deity of boundless glow in the form of the (highest) principle, he is saved from all danger; therefore it is called mantra". And Jayaratha (comm. on TĀ III, 225) says: *mananaṃ sarvavettṛtvaṃ trāṇaṃ saṃsāryanugrahaḥ*: "meditation is omniscience; salvation is favour to him who transmigrates". According to western scientific etymology the word mantra consists of the root *man-* "applying emotional, moved, willful, intentionally directed thought" and the suffix *-tra-* which is i.a. used for names of instruments (Gonda, *Mantra*, 249f).

Thus mantra means: instrument of "thought". Now we have seen in the first two paragraphs of this chapter how closely word and thought are connected in Indian speculation. Both the Indian and western etymology point to this connection. The Indian etymology also stresses the saving, liberating aspect of the mantra. Actually mantras are used in every tantric practice, be it initiation or consecration, worship or yoga or meditation. The relation between mantra and speech, a subject already touched upon earlier in this paragraph is clearly stated PTV 243: "the mantras are the venerable (energy) of the letters" (*mantrā varṇabhaṭṭārakāḥ*.) The mantra is and always essentially shall be pure energy of speech at its highest level but at the same time there are innumerable mantras which are in accordance with their kind able to act at different levels of manifestation and which moreover exist at the level of the empiric world since one is able to pronounce them in Vaikharī and write them down (cf. Padoux, *Parole*, p. 295). In the texts often the term *vidyā*[6] occurs where one expects mantra. TT XI 61-62 has a statement about the difference of these two words. "There are vidyā and mantra, it is said. What is the difference, tell me that, O Lord" (asks Devī). Śiva answers: "The difference of the deities of the

[6] *vidyā* in Kashmir texts also can have the meaning of: deified energy depending on the Goddess (Padoux, *Parole*, p. 338 note 5).

letters is twofold allover. The vidyās are regarded as having Thee for deity and the mantras have Me for a deity" (*varṇānām devatābhedā dvividhāḥ syus te tv aśeṣataḥ tvaddaivatyāḥ smṛtā vidyā maddaivatyās tu mantrakāḥ*). Thus the mantra is said to refer to the god and the vidyā to the goddess.

14. *Mantraśāstra*

In view of the importance of sound, speech and mantras in Śāktism and Tantrism it is not surpising that the terms *tantraśāstra* = the teachings of the Tantras, and *mantraśāstra* = the teachings of mantra are often interchangeable. This however is only the meaning of mantraśāstra in a broader sense. Next to it exists a more specific meaning, that of a kind of *mystic linguistics* comparable to the medieval jewish Kabbāla.[7] Thus Vedāntadeśika, the famous teacher and the successor of Rāmānuja in the school of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, living in the fourteenth century gives the following explanation of the first word of the most important mantra of his school (the *mūlamantra*): *oṃ namo nārāyaṇāya* (cf. Rahasyatrayasāra 353-362).

Oṃ = *Auṃ*.

The '*a*' is Viṣṇu who creates, sustains and destroys the world.

'*ṃ*' is the individual soul (*jīva*), who exists for the fulfilment of the purposes of Viṣṇu.

'*u*' indicates this relationship of Viṣṇu and jīva as the only existing one.

'*a*' is derived from the root *ava-*, "to protect, to please", the termination '*va*' being dropped; thus '*a*' means 'protector'. Towards the ever-liberated (a special kind of superhuman beings) and those who are already liberated the protection of the Lord is full and complete; but it is restrained in the case of those who still are in the *saṃsāra* by the need of punishment caused by actions which are displeasing to Him.

The primary reason for protecting is the Lord's mercy, now "the Lord protects with His Consort Lakṣmī (= Śrī) ever by His side, for she is the very embodiment of mercy".

'*a*' is in the dative, the dative singular suffix has been dropped.

Auṃ means the surrender of the self to the Supreme Self.

'*u*' means "only", i.e. the devotee of Nārāyaṇa should not have contact with other deities, and this avoidance of contact extends even to the devotees of other deities.

'*ṃ*' = jīva. In accordance with the Sāṃkhya, the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas distinguish 25 tattvas (principles) of which jīva is 25th. These tattvas correspond with

[7] Cf. G. Scholem, *Major trends in Jewish mysticism*, [3]1954, p. 217ff.

the consonants of the alphabet where the '*m*' is the 25th consonant. Moreover '*m*' stands for the root *man-* = "to know", so it denotes the jīva who is atomic and who is of the essential nature of jñāna (knowledge) and possessed of the attribute jñāna (a reference to Brahmasūtra 2:3:18: "*jīvātmā* is a knower". This knowledge is expressed in the following words: "The seeker after liberation (*mokṣa*) should meditate upon the *jīvātman* as absolutely pure and having its enjoyment only in being Śeṣa[8] to the Supreme Being". Moreover some consider this (third letter) to be a short form for *aham* = I.

15. *Secrecy of certain texts*

Though the subject is not directly connected with mantra it does not seem to be out of place to make a remark on the secrecy of certain passages in tantric texts, especially those dealing with details of the cakra-pūjā of the Kaulas. Thus in TT VIII, 72-90, the verses are written with disordered letters. This cryptic style of writing has been adopted to keep the contents concealed from non-initiated people. These can only be read by those who have the key. TT VIII deals with the different kinds of wine to be used in the cakra-pūjā, how to prepare and how to drink them (cf. Avalon, *Introduction* TT, 26-28). Quite different is the habit of the editor of the ŚST, for instance in II, 13, 15, to replace the words which could lead to embarrassment by asterisks (***).

Still another way to conceal the contents of certain passages is the use of *sandh(y)ābhāṣā*: intentional language. In this language a state of consciousness is expressed by an erotic term and the mythological and cosmological vocabulary is enriched by haṭhayogic and sexual terms (Eliade, *Yoga*, ed. 1960, 251). The sandh(y)ābhāṣā which is more prominent in Buddhist than Hindu Tantrism uses words which have several meanings of which one is erotic. For instance *vajra*: thunderbolt also can have the meaning *liṅga* (phallos) or *śūnya* (the void). But also words which have a primary sexual connotation as e.g. *sāmarasya*: "the bliss of sexual union" can be used for the bliss of mystical union. This is the meaning in the following sentence (ŚT): Those glorious men who worship that body of (Śakti) in sāmarasya are free from the waves of poison in the untraversable sea of the universe (the saṃsāra) (cf. Woodroffe, *Garland*, p. 172).

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[8] Litt. remainder, secondary matter. In this context it means: part. Rahasyatrayasāra p. 25 *śeṣe* means: existing not for (its) own sake but for the fulfilment of God's purposes.

16. *What is bija?*

Like most of the terms used in Śāktism and Tantrism, *bija* has different meanings: 1. Bīja occurs in the context of the emanation of word and speech. Thus ŚT I 78 records that from the *saguṇa Śiva* rise *śakti*, *nāda* and *bindu*. This *bindu* is threefold: a) *bindu* (Śiva), b) *bija* (*Śakti*) and c) *nāda* (Śiva-Śakti). 2. Bīja is also used to indicate the vowels whereas the consonants are called *yoni* (see page 99). 3. *Bija* = *bijamantra* i.e. a mantra consisting of one syllable with no ordinary meaning and always ending in the *anusvāra*: *ṃ*.

According to PT (IV, 14) bīja "owes its name to the fact that it is the seed of the moving and immovable world" (*carācarasya jagato bījatvāt*).

The most important bījamantra will be discussed in the section on the main mantras (see page 110f.). Here the relation between bīja and deity asks our attention. According to Woodroffe (*Garland*, p. 242-243): "each deity (*devatā*) has his or her bīja". Thus the deity of *KRĪṂ* is Kālī, that of *HRĪṂ* is Māyā, that of *RAṂ* is Agni. The mantra of a devatā is that devatā.

A few words must be added on the origin of the bījamantra. According to Bharati (*Tantric Tradition*, p. 114-118) we can distinguish three different theories: 1. association of certain sounds with aggression and power, e.g. the old bījamantra PHAṬ, called the weapon-mantra, is aggressive from the very beginning. *Phaṭ* is a colloquial term for "burst, explode". *Vaṣaṭ* or *Vauṣaṭ* serves to entice or assuage power since the phonetic complex V-S conjures up in the Indian ear excessive speed. 2. According to the *Nirukta* the divinity is not fond or being accosted or even referred to by its actual name. Thus Indra is called *Indha* in ChU. In a similar way *KRĪṂ* can refer to Kṛṣṇa; *ŚRĪṂ* to Śrī (Lakṣmī). 3. The vibration (*spanda*) theory: certain sounds in nature are felt to have a definite pitch for the Indian ear. Now, if we assume that the elements in action produce a pitch which creates vibration to the creator of the mantra, then he will probably evaluate the constituents of his mantra by means of an allocation of their sound-vibration to the elements with which the particular deity is connected: thus *RAṂ* for Agni (fire) *VAṂ* for Varuṇa (water). Except for the facts mentioned under 2 the reasoning of Bharati is highly speculative. In reality the problem is still unsolved and must be left for future research.

17. *Puraścaraṇa (preliminary rites)* (cf. also page 161).

KT XV 1-11 gives information about this subject. Śri Devī asks Śiva about the characteristics of the puraścaraṇa (*puraścaraṇalakṣaṇam*) and the details of the bringing near (of the mantra) etc. (*sthānāhārādibheda*). The Lord answers

that already by listening to his explanation "the essence of the mantra becomes clear" (*mantratattvaṃ prakāśate*). "There is no higher worship here than that of muttering (mantras)" (*japayajñāt paro yajño nāparo 'stīha kaścana*). Therefore by *japa* one realizes *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, the four aims of life. "Therefore one should practise the training consisting of muttering and meditation" (*japadhyānamayaṃ yogaṃ tasmāt samācaret*).

The deity then explains: 1. "the worship of an image three times a day permanently, 2. muttering, 3. refreshing (the deceased or the good) (*tarpaṇam*), 4. sacrifice, and 5. feeding of brahmins is called puraścaraṇa". In case of default a double number of japa is presented.

18. *Mantrasiddhi (perfection in mantra)*

The KT (XV, 12ff.) says: "of him who in a correct way is perfect (*siddha*) in one mantra, (in combination) with the worship with five paths (the items one up to five just mentioned) all the mantras come to perfection (*siddhi*) by your favour (*tvatprasādāt*), mistress of the kula". By four things perfection in mantra is obtained: by ability of instruction (*upadeśasya sāmarthyāt*), by favour of the guru (*guruprasādataḥ*) by power of the mantra (*mantraprabhāvāt*) and by faithful service (*bhaktyā*). The mantra of a person who mutters a mantra which at both sides is enclosed by the *bhūtalipi* (*mantraṃ bhūtalipyā tu sampuṭam*; on bhūtalipi, see below p. 136, 143) a thousand times in the usual order and the inverted order (*kramotkramāt*), becomes perfect. He should worship the maṇḍala (see page 112) which has at both sides the letters of the alphabet connected with sixty-three letters (*maṇḍalaṃ triṣaṣṭyakṣarasaṃyuktamātṛkākṣarasaṃpuṭam*). Only the mantra which has been obtained by the favour of the guru will lead to perfection. "But the mantra which has been accidentally heard or which is overheard by a trick or which was written on a page, the muttering of this (mantra) is useless".

19. *Instructions for japa*

Japa means the muttering of mantra (see also page 153). We just dealt with the preparations for japa. In this paragraph the place of japa and the requirements for the person who performs it will be mentioned. Japa is very important because if properly done the power of the mantra is discharged and can accomplish different aims, be it worldly aims or complete liberation and the realization of the highest deity. KT XVII, 34 gives the following "etymological" explanation of *japa*: "on account of destruction of evil done in thousands of lives and on account of the appearance of the highest deity it is called japa" (*janmāntarasahasreṣu kṛtapāpapranāśanāt paradevaprakāśāc ca japa ity abhidhīyate*).

ST II 129-140, and KT XV 22, 34 mention special places which are favourable for japa and others which should be avoided. The person who performs japa should eat certain things (140) and should be "calm, pure, using his common sense, adorning himself, full of faithful service, having authority, free from dualities, steadfast, being silent, with controlled self" (KT XV, 111) and "adorned with fine odours, flowers, clothes and so on" (KT XV, 113).

20. *When is a mantra not powerful and ineffective?*

At page 78 we already mentioned that one of the tasks of a guru was to instruct the pupil in the *vīrya-* (power) of the mantra. Without this special knowledge the japa of the mantra is useless. According to a late manual, the *Prāṇatoṣiṇī* (pp. 422-3) each japa has to be introduced with the following rites:

1. *mantracaitanya* (consciousness of the mantra). One has to consider the *mūlamantra* as identified with the Citśakti, the highest śakti, a) by means of raising the mūlamantra from the *mūlādhāra*, up to the centre of the *sahasrāra* or b) by means of uttering *KLĪṂ*, *ŚRĪṂ*, *HRĪṂ*, then putting the *mātṛkā* before the beginning and after the ending of the mūlamantra and repeating this entire formula 108 times.
2. *mantrārtha*: knowing "the meaning of the mantra".
3. *kulluka*: "?", differs according to the deity of the mantra to be muttered. e.g. for Tārā it is a bījamantra of five syllables
4. *setu*: "bridge". This differs according to the *varṇa*: brahmins and kṣatriyas have to utter in their heart *OṂ*; vaiśyas : *PHAṬ*, and śūdras : *HRĪṂ*.
5. *mahāsetu*: "great bridge" is different according to the deity of the mantra; e.g. for Tārā it is *HRĪṂ*. Mahāsetu serves to ensure the suitability of the time of japa.
6. *nirvāṇa*: "bliss", since without this rite there will be no perfection (*siddhi*). In the *maṇipūracakra* the aspirant should utter *OṂ AṂ* + mūlamantra + *AUṂ* + the entire alphabet + *OṂ*.
7. *yonimudrāvibhāvana*: showing the yonimudrā (gesture of a triangle with the top downwards).
8. Then follows *aṅganyāsa*: "application of the mantra to the (six) limbs (of the body)" (see page 143).
9. *prāṇāyāma*: "control of the breath".
10. *mukha-* or *jihvāśodhanam*: purification of the mouth or the tongue. It consists again of muttering certain bījamantras which differ according to the deity of the mantra. It is repeated ten times.
11. *prāṇayoga*: "training of the vital breath". It consists of repeating seven times the bījamantra *HRĪṂ* before and after the muttering of the mantra.

12. *dipanam* or *dipanī*: "kindling". The mantra is repeated seven times with OṂ before and after the muttering.

13. Sometimes *aśaucabhaṅga* "destruction of impurity" is added. The PrT does not give any further explanation of this rite. When these rites have been performed the japa of the mantra can begin. The PrT has no reference to any of the older texts as TT, PT, ŚT or KT which are the main sources of the matter dealt with in these chapters. The older texts, however, mention a series of ten *saṃskāra* (ceremonies) which have to be performed in the case of faults (*doṣa*) in the mantra. ŚT II, 64-110 (cf. KT XV 65-70) and NT XVI, 33-36 give a list of all the faults. They consist mainly of the presence or omission of certain sounds or of a wrong number of syllables.

According to ŚT II, 111 the aspirant should perform the yonimudrā to make up for the faults in the mantra. If this is impossible the pupil should perform the ten *saṃskāras*:

1. *jananam* "producing". It is the lifting up of the mantra out of the alphabet (*mātṛkāmadhyād uddhāraḥ*).

2. *jīvanam* "vivifying". It consists of interspersing the syllables of the mantras with *OṂ*.

3. *tāḍanam* "striking". Having written down the letters of the mantra the pupil should strike them separately with sandal-water and the bīja *YĀṂ*.

4. *bodhanam* "awakening". He should strike the written mantra with flowers of the oleander, in number of the letters of that mantra, and with *YĀṂ*.

5. *abhiṣecanam* "consecration". The pupil should according to the manner record in his own Tantra sprinkle and purify the mantra with aśvattha blossoms in a number equal to that of the letters of the mantra with *NAMAḤ*.

6. *vimalīkaraṇam* "purification". With concentrated mind the pupil should burn the threefold evil of the mantra by means of the light mantra: *OṂ, HA RA AUṂ*.

7. *āpyāyanam* "causing to swell". The mantra is muttered 108 times and during the muttering each letter is sprinkled with water mixed with flowers.

8. *tarpaṇam* "refreshing by libation". The mūlamantra is said 108 times and the mantra is refreshed with water.

9. *dipanam* "kindling". The mantra is connected with *OṂ HRĪṂ ŚRĪṂ*.

10. *gopanam* "keeping secret". One should not reveal the mantra to other people (see ŚT II, 112-122 and KT XV, 71, 72).[9]

If one compares the rites given in the PrT with the saṃskāras of the older

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[9] NT XVIII 6-8 mentions only nine saṃskāras: jananam and jīvanam are missing, but it has a new saṃskāra: *indhananiveśanam* "entering the kindling"; before and after the japa, the bīja *HUṂ* is muttered.

texts one can conclude that there is some similarity. The ten saṃskāras serve to eliminate faults of the mantra. But if one takes a closer look at the names of these rites, one is tempted to conclude that these saṃskāras could originally have been a more general series of ceremonies introducing the practice of mantras. Perhaps study of more texts can solve this riddle.

21. *Mantranyāsa*

The subject of the application of mantra has been touched upon a few times (see page 81, 85). Here we have to discuss several different forms f nyāsa. First we have to distinguish between *mantranvāsa* and *mātṛkānyāsa*; the latter is the application of the energy of the whole alphabet. ŚT VI, 1-3, deals with the nyāsa of the mātṛkā which in this case is the goddess Sarasvatī. The commentary gives the following instruction:

1. The aspirant begins with *AṂ KAṂ KHAṂ GAṂ GHAṂ ṄAṂ AṂ hṛdayāya namaḥ* ("homage to the heart").

2. Then follows the purification of the hand (*karaśuddhi*) by means of the four neuter letters *Ṛ Ṝ Ḷ Ḹ*, since they belong neither to the vowels which are male (*bīja*) nor to the consonants which are female (*yoni*) (cf. PT IV, 9).

3. Then follows *AṂ KAṂ KHAṂ GAṂ GHAṂ ṄAṂ anguṣṭhābhyāṃ namaḥ* ("homage to the two thumbs") and after it follows *karanyāsa* "application of the mantra on the hand". The sixteen vowels are applied to the palms and backs of the right and left hand and to the fingers of both hands. Then follow the consonants *KA* up to *SA* which are applied to the top of the phalanges of the fingers beginning at the forefinger of the left hand and ending at the forefinger of the right hand. *HA* and *LA* are applied to the two thumbs and *KṢA* to all the limbs. The same ŚT (VI, 28-33) gives other forms of nyāsa for the same goddess: 28 deals with the *sṛṣṭinyāsa* (creation-application) which implies applications of the letters of the alphabet — in this case all with *visarga* (thus: *AḤ ĀḤ* etc.) — starting from the heart and going down to the feet, then beginning again at the hands and ending at the head. 28, 29 deal with the *sthitinyāsa* (duration-application) which implies beginning at the head and ending at the feet. In this case the aspirant starts with *ḌA* and ends with *ṬHA*. 31 speaks about the *saṃhāranyāsa* (annihilation-application). It starts at the feet and ends up at the head, applying the letters *KṢA* up to *A* (cf. also PT XXII, 5-7).

4. The *aṅganyāsa* or *ṣaḍaṅganyāsa* (the application of the (five) or six aṅga-mantras). These are: *OṂ hṛdayāya namaḥ*, *Oṃ śirase* (head) *svāhā*, *Oṃ śikhāyai* (haircrest) *vauṣaṭ*, *Oṃ kavacāya huṃ*, (*Oṃ netrāya* (eye) *vaṣaṭ*),

Oṃ astrāya (weapon) *phaṭ*. (Cf. SvT I, 60-64, IV, 97 and Padoux, *Parole*, p. 257; cf. also ch. V. p. 135).

5. Finally we must give attention to the *bhūtalipinyāsa* (application of written letters which are elements; cf. also ch. V, p. 143). ŚT VII, 1-4, furnishes a description of this form of nyāsa: "Now I shall tell you the bhūtalipi which is to be kept secret, and very difficult to obtain; and having obtained this the wise of Śiva reached all wishes" (*sarvān kāmān prapedire*). The letters are written down in this way:

first group (*varga*) *A I U Ṛ Ḷ*
second group: *E AI O AU*
third group: *HA YA RA VA LA*
fourth-eighth group: *KA KHA GA GHA* and *ṄA* and so forth up to *MA*
ninth group: *ŚA ṢA SA*: together 42 letters.

According to the Tantrasamuccaya (II, 14) the aspirant should "having controlled his breath, having caused to fall from above his haircrest a stream of nectar in the form of the letters from *A* up to *KṢA* (*ādyarṇarūpāmṛta-vāridhārām*) all over his head and having immersed his body, he should spread over his body those written (letters)."

22. *Some important mantras and bijamantras*

A. *Pādukāmantra* (mantra of the sandals). According to KT XII, 12, there is no mantra higher than the pādukā; and in TT II, 12-16 it is said: "Tell me that vidyā which produces all that is dear". Then lord Śiva communicates the pādukāmantra to the goddess: *pādukāṃ pūjayāmi* "I worship the sandals (of the guru)". The meditation connected with this mantra is given in the Pādukāpañcaka). The aspirant adores the lotus feet of the guru resting on jewelled sandals which are inside a triangle which is in the twelve-petalled lotus which is in the pericarp of the sahasrāra.

B. HAṂSA mantra which is given in PT IV, 16-21 "By birth from that bindu (see page 94), being the end of that it is called *HAṂ*. *HAṂ* is called a man, *SA* is recorded as prakṛti (female). That śakti (*SA*) is thought to be unmutterable; therefore there is something (added) at the right and the left side. The *bindu* (the dot under the Ṃ) is the right part and the *visarga* (the ḥ) is the left part. *HAṂSA* being the self of the prakṛti, this world has that (HAṂSA) as self. Prakṛti, having known that her own form is a male has come to the state of *SO HAṂ*" (*puṃrūpaṃ sā viditvā svaṃ sohaṃbhāvam upāgatā*). "That is the mantra called the Paramātman" (*sa eṣa paramātmākhyo manuḥ*). "From that great mantra, after the dropping of *SA* and *HA*, comes *OṂ*."

C. The *Gāyatrī*-mantra, ṚV III, 62, 10, is also of great importance in Tantrism (cf. also ch. V, p. 123). It is described PT XXIX 14-26. The mantra is *tat savitur vareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt* and is explained in the following way:

14. *Tat* refers to the first cause of all substance in the form of fiery energy in the disc of the sun, that is *sadānandaṃ paraṃ brahma*: the true bliss, the highest Brahman.

15. *savitur* ("of the Sun"): Always the producer of all animate beings.

16/17. *vareṇyam*: on account of its excellence and therefore recorded to be served and worshipped by all; and to whom prayer should be said.

18a. These 8 letters are *bhūr* = *A*.

18b. *bhargo*: on account of destruction of evil and on account of being propitious to the faithful.

19. *devasya*: of him who is always connected with the virtue of giving rain etc. or who is glowing by revealed brightness.

20. *dhīmahi* a form of *dhyai-* which means "to think".

22a. We always think about our identity with the subtle one *(yaḥ sūkṣmaḥ so 'ham ity evaṃ cintayāmaḥ sadaiva tu)*

22b. The second eight letters are: *bhuvaḥ* = *U*.

23. *dhiyo* means *buddhi* in the accusative plural.

23b. *yo*, the masculine gender being used here for the neuter *yat* which is the form of glow that is the centre of all the Vedas. "The incorporation of the destruction of the evil of the faithful" *(bhajatāṃ pāpanāśasya dehabhūtam)*.

25a. *naḥ* is the genitive plural of *asmad* ("us").

25b. *pracodayāt*: the meaning is: may it send us on the path of prayer.

26a. Thus is the third group of eight letters: *svar* = *Ṃ*.

D. Bījamantra: *OṂ*. This famous mantra has been dealt with at p. 103.

E. *Māyābīja (HRĪṂ)* is another famous mantra. PT IV, 1-10 gives an explanation of it:

H: from it arose six *ūrmis* or waves (of existence): hunger, thirst, sorrow, ignorance, decay and death, and the six letters from *A* up to *Ū*.

R: from R arose the four elements beginning with fire and ending with earth together with (their) attributes: touch, form, taste and smell, and the four letters *Ṛ*, *Ṝ*, *Ḷ*, *Ḹ*.

Ī: the four *karaṇa* "organs of sense" (mind, intellec., sense of individuality and reflection), the body and the consciousness (*cetana*) are called the attributes of Ī; and also the six letters from *E* up to the *visarga*. *Ṃ* is not explained in PT IV.

23. *Cakra* and *maṇḍala*

A. *Cakra* "wheel, circle" can describe several things in Śāktism and Tantrism.

1. In yogic contexts it usually means one of the six or more centres of energy in the human body. They will be dealt with elsewhere in this book (see pp. 184f.).

2. In texts dealing with pūja by means of the five *M*; among the Kaulas *cakra* is used for the group of participants in that *pūjā* sitting in a circle.

3. *Cakra* is also used as a synonym for *maṇḍala* ("anything round, circle") and is then a term for diagrams consisting of different geometrical form representing the cosmos with its deities and used both as place for worship (see page 139) and as object of worship and meditation. By means of these the aspirant hopes to participate in the powers present in the cosmos with its deities and to be able to fulfill his wishes. On account of the correspondence between macrocosmos and microcosmos in Tantrism there also is a correspondence between the cakra in the body (see 1) and the maṇḍala.

Something should be said on the process of meditation. Though it is well known that the meditation of a *maṇḍala* and *yantra* starts from the outside and then proceeds step by step to the centre of it, we do not know older tantric texts that give a description of it except YHT I and III. There are at least three further indications showing that the meditation practice formerly was the same: 1. ŚT III, 117 speaks of *doors* in the *outer square* of the maṇḍala. 2. Already RTU IV, 52 mentions the term *bhūgṛha* = *bhūpura*: "house or abode of the earth". The bhūpura represents our visible world where the meditation starts (cf. also p. 114f.). 3. On pictures of some maṇḍala we find the *bindu* in the centre, which only can represent the highest divinity.

The main geometrical forms are squares and circles. Often there is a great square inside which is or are (a) smaller square(s); in other cases the maṇḍala consists of a great square inside which there is a smaller circle which encompasses the main symbols. Already in BSuS I, 22-28, there are regulations for the preparation of the *vedi* (the Vedic altar) in the form of a square (cf. ŚT III, 8-9). And according to Śat Br VIII, 3, 1, 27 the vedi represents the extent of the earth. Dr. Kramrisch argues that the square and the circle are coordinated in the architecture of India from the Vedic fire-altar onwards (*Temple*, 22). The *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* (maṇḍala of the Lord of the site) which is of two main types, the *maṇḍūka*

with 64 squares and the *paramaśayin* with 81 squares is the base of the Indian temple and also of each place of worship (cf. ŚT III, 8, 9: place for the *dīkṣā*) (Kramrisch, *Temple* 86, 87). The difference between the plan of the temple and most of the maṇḍalas under consideration is that the latter do not only consist of squares and circles, but are also provided with triangles and demi-circles. Often bījas are written on the maṇḍala. After our reflections on bīja and cosmos (see page 102) the significance of their presence on the maṇḍala is not difficult to explain.

A. *Some maṇḍalas*

ŚT III, 103-135 records as part of the preparations for the *kriyādīkṣā* (cf. page 80) the drawing of four *maṇḍalas*.

I. The first, the *sarvatobhadra* ("in every direction auspicious"; 127), consists of a great square divided into 256 small squares (107). In the centre there is a lotus of 36 squares (108); and in the middle of the eastern, southern, western and northern sides of the great square there is a door (117). The maṇḍala should be painted in five colours (119ff).

II. The second maṇḍala (128-130) is a variant of I, but consists of only 144 small squares.

III. The third maṇḍala (131-134), the *navanābhamaṇḍala* ("the maṇḍala with the nine naves"), consists of 265 small squares; in the centre of the great square there is a space of 64 small squares with nine naves: five of them are decorated with a lotus and four with a svastika.

IV. The fourth maṇḍala (135), the *pañcābjamaṇḍala* ("the maṇḍala with the five lotuses") is a variant of III with the difference that the svastikas are left out.

24 *Yantra*

A. In the existing literature yantra and maṇḍala are often considered to be synonyms. This is not correct, because *yantra* is general means an instrument, an implement. The yantra is often three-dimensional whereas the maṇḍala always is two-dimensional. Maṇḍala and yantra often have the same geometrical forms, but the yantra may also have different forms. (cf. SL ed. R. Anantakrishna Śastri and K. R. Gāru, Madras 1937, passim). The yantra is more worshipped than meditated upon.[10] As far as the aims are concerned one can say that the yantra is more used for worldly purposes than for liberation, whereas the maṇḍala is used for both purposes.

[10] Cf. ch. V, p. 142f.

B. *Some yantras*

1. The *Śrīyantra* is well known from the frontispieces of several works of J. Woodroffe (e.g. Śakti and Śākta, 5th ed. 1959).[11] See below. ŚT VIII, 141-143 describes another form of this yantra, namely as "a lotus with the vowels written on its leaves and the consonants written on its filament". This yantra is called the "Mahālakṣmī yantra which gives the result of complete sovereignty, which appeases all suffering and which keeps off all mishap" (*Mahālakṣmīyantraṃ sarvaiśvaryaphalapradaṃ sarvaduḥkhapraśamanaṃ sarvāpadvinivāraṇam*).

2. ŚT VII, 53-64 mentions five different yantras for different purposes:

a) 53-54 records the *Viyad-yantra* (yantra of the ether) which has certain letters on it, is made with red lac and sandal (*lakṣācandananirmita-*) and which gives complete appeasement as antidote at the rise of Rāhu in Rohiṇī (a certain constellation) (*rohiṇyām udaye rāhor viṣaghnaṃ sarvaśāntidam*).

b) 55-56 records the *Vāyavīya-yantra* (yantra of the wind) also with letters and it should be dug in at the north-west of the door of the house of an enemy, at the rise of Saturn in Arcturus. "Certainly it will be his death" (*tasya mṛtir vā bhavcti dhruvam*).

c) 57-59 mentions the *Āgneya-yantra* (yantra of the fire). It also has letters on it and is made with red lac and saffron (*lākṣāl.uṅkumanirmita-*). It gives protection of all beings (*rakṣakṛt sarvabhūtānām*), it will destroy the enemy.

Here follows a short description of the Śrī yantra as given by Avalon (Introduction TT 4-8).

The *Śrīyantra* consists of:

a) a great square with four doors.

b) inside this square there are six concentric circles; the fifth and the sixth are decorated with petals and leaves of the lotus.

c) inside the small circle there are nine interpenetrating triangles: five with the top downwards and four with the top upwards:

1. the centre of the yantra is a dot (*bindu*) inside the smallest cakra (called *sarvānandamaya*: consisting of complete bliss) representing the source and base of the universe.

2. The second cakra is called *siddhiprada* "bestowing perfection" with the three śaktis.

3. The third cakra is the *sarvarakṣakara* "effecting complete protection."

[11] Cf. Rao, *Iconography*, I, 330f.

It has eight angles representing heat, cold, happiness, sorrow, wish and the three *guṇas*.

4. Then follows the *sarvarogahara* "taking away all illness", having ten angles representing the ten lower śaktis.

5. The fifth cakra, the *sarvārthasādhaka* "performing everything" also has ten angles representing the ten *prāṇas* (vital breaths).

6. is the sixth innermost circle mentioned above (c) compassing the fourteen angles = 14 *nāḍī* (arteries) and called *sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka* "giving all well-being".

7. Then follows the cakra of the eight lotus-leaves called *sarvasaṃkṣobhakara* "making everything restless".

8. The eighth cakra is the fifth circle called *sarvāśāparipūraka* "fulfilling all expectations", consisting of 16 petals representing 16 devatās of the siddhi.

9. The space between the fourth and the third circle is related to cakra 2; that between the third and second circle to cakra 3, 4 and 5 and that between the second and the first circle to cakra 6, 7 and 8.

10. The whole space between the sixteen petals and the outer square is called *bhūpura* "abode of the earth" = *bhūgṛha* "house of the earth" (RTU IV, 52).

d) 60, 61 the *Vāruṇa-yantra* (yantra of the water). It has letters on it and is worshipped at the rise of Nakṣatra in Śukra. It will bring (the enemy) under control etc. (*vaśyādikṛd bhavet*).

e) 62-63 finally gives the *Pārthiva-yantra* (yantra of the earth). It has letters on it and is made of white mustard in (a vessel of) clay and at the rise of the sixteenth lunar mansion in the moon it is causing obstruction (for the enemy) in every case (*sarvatra stambhakṛd bhavet*).

PT XXXII, 1-37 gives different yantras for different purposes, e.g. for a long life (4), for controlling others (6), for protection of one's own dwelling-place (12, 13), for perfection or success of all wishes (21).

25. *Mudrās*

Mudrās or symbolic gestures occupy a major position in Tantric rituals. In their terminology the word *mudrā* has many meanings.[12] Etymologically it means an impression, (or a signet ring) from which it came to mean a seal. It may also mean special features or a stamp — a hall-mark distinguishing a particular person or thing (NT 19, 80). In Indian iconography the distinc-

[12] See J. Gonda, *Mudrā*, in *Ex orbe religionum*, Studia G. Widengren, II, Leiden 1972. p. 21.

tive features of a particular person are, inter alia, often depicted by specific hand-gestures symbolizing his status and functions. These gestures that figure so prominently in classical Indian dancing too are usually known as *hasta*, meaning position or gestures of the hand. When employed by a sādhaka in Tantric rites as symbols representing a sacred being or object, such gestures are called mudrās and are invested with sacred power by the authority of the deity worshipped. In this sense mudrā does indeed signify seal, stamp or hall-mark.

A mudrā is just as efficacious as a mantra. In fact a mantra only becomes effective when accompanied by the appropriate mudrā (NT 20, 36). Tantric sādhanā to achieve perfection (*siddhi*) comprises the three constituents of mantra, dhyāna and mudrā. In his commentary on the TĀ 15, 159 Jayaratha confirms this close relationship between mantra and mudrā by asserting that to take effect the former must be accompanied by the latter (cf. NT 20, 60). To stress the utility and importance of mudrās in Tantric sādhanā, Tantric texts tend to offer far-fetched — and incorrect — etymological explanations. The Yoginī Tantra (1, 57) states that the term mudrā is derived from two roots: *mud-* (to delight) and *drā-* (to disperse). Mudrā is in fact a manifestation of the active force of the original Śakti consisting of pure knowledge and, in that form this active force delights the sādhaka (by bringing success) and disperses misfortunes away from him. Abhinavagupta's explanation is slightly different. He traces the term mudrā to the roots *mud-* (to delight) and *rā-* (to yield). He claims that the physical effort of forming a mudrā yields to the sādhaka the mental satisfaction of experiencing the supreme bliss (*mud*) of union with the Self (TĀ 32, 3). And so the term gradually came to be identified with the divine active force (*kriyāśakti*; cf. SvT 4, 375). Abhinavagupta mentions three types of mudrā produced respectively by the efforts of the sādhaka's body, of his mind and of his speech (TĀ 15, 259). He seems to extend the term to cover all the three elements of sādhanā: mudrā, dhyāna and mantra.

Mudrās are undoubtedly physical presentations of mantras and as such on a par with the iconographic representations so vividly visualized in dhyāna. Thus, as pointed out by A. J. D. Campbell,[13] the three active constituents of the sādhaka's personality — his mind, speech and body — are activated to participate in expressing the one reality in three ways.

Mudrās also aid and accentuate the enactment of the symbolic drama, which pūjā undoubtedly is for effecting the ultimate union with the Cosmic

[13] Introduction to Tyra de Kleen's *Mudrā*, London 1924, p. 11.

Reality. This dramatic aspect is quite obvious in certain forms of rites (cf. Kṣemarāja's commentary on NT 20, 36 ab.).

The term mudrā not only applies to hand-gestures formed by interlacing the fingers of one or both hands, but also to holding the hand or hands in a fixed position, and is moreover used to cover certain body-postures sometimes specifically referred to as *mudrābandha*. The NT uses the word mudrā in this context which then also means a seal and which is then identified with a śakti of the deity. "The knower of yogic technique (then) gets (into the) mudrā called *khecara* which resides there (in mūlādhāra). O Goddess, when the spirit (of the aspirant) is sealed by that mudrā, he rises up (to his sahasrāra)". Kṣemarāja explains that here mudrā is identified with Khecarī-Śakti. From the context it is clear that here the Tantra is referring to *khecarī-mudrā-(bandha)*, a special posture adopted by yogins to awaken the kuṇḍalinī in Kuṇḍalinī-Yoga (see Avalon, *Serpent Power*, p. 206). The Haṭha-Yoga mentions several other mudrā-bandhas, like mūlabandha etc. Mudrā sometimes denotes the sādhaka's female partner or wife of a deity[15] but in that sense it is almost exclusively confined to the Buddhist Tantras. Mudrā is the fourth of the five makāras used in Kaula types of Tantric rituals (see p. 73), where in modern times it stands for parched rice, some other cereal or savoury titbit. Nevertheless one wonders whether originally it did not mean a female partner.

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[14] See HYP, ed.

[15] Jean Przyluski, *Mudrā*; *Indian Culture*, Part II, Calcutta 1936, pp. 715-719.

PART THREE

MODES OF WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

BY

SANJUKTA GUPTA

CHAPTER FIVE

TANTRIC SĀDHANĀ : PŪJĀ

Introduction

Tantric sādhanā (religious practice) consists of two parts: ritual worship (*pūjā*)[1] and meditation (*yoga*). Both are of equal importance to every Tantric. Even the *siddha* or *avadhūta*, recognized to be so highly spiritual that he can afford to disregard rules applicable to ordinary Tantrics, continues to perform his daily *pūjā* along with his yogic practices. The importance of *pūjā* cannot be exaggerated. From the time of his initiation till the end of his life, every Tantric is bound by the duty of performing his daily pūjā. But it is not easy to find a definitive form of Tantric ritual. The only possible criterion for labelling a Tantric ritual that we can suggest is that it is a ritual performed by Tantrics, and that a Tantric is one who firmly believes himself to be a Tantric. There are, however, dangers in this because Tantrics may also perform non-Tantric rituals. On the practical level, when Tantrics are engaged in performing their religious activities, a great deal of confusion prevails. The muddle is partly due to their non-exclusive allegiance to various streams of tradition, which may be ancient and/or recorded, or comparatively modern and local. Besides, there is a tendency amongst present-day Tantrics not to establish their exclusive identity, but to take over other religious traditions which approximate to their own.

Admittedly there is nothing strange in that. At any point in the history of a religious system of ritual, new and local elements of practice and interpretation may appear to have been introduced into the main body of the recorded system. There are no means of checking this practice, and it continues to date. Within the last hundred years, for instance, a great many texts have been published in the Tantric milieu recording a mass of magic practices not found in older texts. A typical example is the Śāvarī Tantra — a collection of a vast number of magic rites and formulae used by rural people, especially in North India. These are mostly described in local languages, which the editors have sometimes corrected and/or translated into chaste Hindi or Sanskrit.

[1] The term pūjā is briefly but thoroughly handled by Diehl, *Instrument and Purpose*, pp. 66-67 in a footnote.

Nevertheless in describing Tantric ritual, it is safe for our purpose to adhere as far as possible to well-established texts. Here again difficulties arise: the body of these is vast, diffuse and heterodox. Practising Tantrics themselves follow different texts or groups of texts as authoritative, according to the particular stream of tradition prevailing within their own group, e.g. Kaulas, Kāpālikas etc. In this survey we restrict ourselves to the practice of those who worship the Goddess (Śakti/Devī) in three popular forms: as Tripurā/Śrī/-Lalitā, as Kālī and as Tārā (i.e. the Kāśmīra-krama or tradition). The famous ten goddesses (*daśa mahāvidyās*) are direct or indirect manifestations of one or other of these three. Secondly, we confine ourselves mostly to textual references recorded in Sanskrit not later than the middle of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. Later texts are consulted chiefly to clarify ambiguous terminology or to explain performances of Tantric rituals that we have actually witnessed. The main bases for our interpretation of Tantric rituals are, however, the earlier Tantras, exegeses and compendiums (e.g. Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava, Yoginīhṛdaya, Kulārṇava, Tantrāloka, Mahākālasaṃhitā, Tantrarāja, Mahānirvāṇa, Śāradātilaka, Tantrasāra by Kṛṣṇānanda, Prāṇatoṣiṇī, Varivasyārahasya, Bhāskararāya's commentaries on NṢT, YHT, Bhāvanopaniṣad and Saundaryalaharī; Paraśurāmakalpasūtra with commentary, Nityotsava, Rāghavabhaṭṭa's comm. on ŚT, etc.).

The criterion for determining a particular Hindu sect or subsect is to pick out which deity it regards as its supreme godhead. But for classifying Tantrics it is important to know the particular *paramparā* or group to which they belong. To determine the *paramparā*, it is further necessary to know its traditional line of teachers, the special etiquette applicable to the tradition followed, the complicated variations in ritual performances arising from the theological and metaphysical background of the *paramparā*, and the personal attitude and idiosyncrasies of eminent teachers in that line. These factors are responsible for the incredible number of divergencies in Tantric ritual activities. Notwithstanding the divergencies, however, the fundamental structure of Tantric ritualism remains constant, whilst it provides scope for introducing almost infinite variations in the ritual practices. These concern the worship of an equally vast number of deities, belonging somewhat loosely to the Śākta pantheon. A fairly regular pattern in Tantric rituals can be discerned by analysing a simple form of daily Tantric worship of the Goddess, which will be described presently.

Tantric ritualism obviously comprises a conglomerate of rites drawn freely from Vedic and other concurrent religious traditions. Tantric tradition has made use of all these rites with modifications to suit its own ideology. The spiritual practice of Tantrics is based on the idea that their philosophical

tenets and religious mandates should find expression in a form that can be experienced also physically, and should not merely function as intellectual exercices. Their metaphysical concepts are worked into their mode of life so that the practitioner may experience them in everyday life. Tantra hardly ever rejects any form of religious ritualism; it juxtaposes its own particular ritual practices to the normative (*smārta*) Hindu rituals. Many Tantric rites are modelled on these normative rituals, e.g. the Hindu sacramental rites (*saṃskāra*), the daily obligatory rites performed by the orthodox caste Hindus, such as the ritual bath, worshipping the Sun at special junctures of the day (*sandhyārcanā*), and the water-oblation to gods, ancestors etc. (*tarpaṇa*). Tantric modifications of these rites are mainly theological. As worshippers of one supreme God, Tantrics regard their chosen deity (*iṣṭadevatā*) as the most sublime manifestation of the divine. Therefore, when they take over a rite in which some other divinity is invoked, they always envisage their own *iṣṭadevatā* as the central point or essence of that deity. For instance, when worshipping the Sun, Tantrics will envisage the Goddess in the centre of the sun's orb. They may even envisage her in different colours to represent the different times of the day (the sun's position in the sky at those times). A striking example of how Tantrics adjust a Vedic *mantra* is the popular Gāyatrī-*mantra*.[2] That *mantra* is of vital importance for every initiated adherent of the normative Hindu religion and is, at least in theory, compulsorily worshipped by all such Hindus. Consequently, Tantrics have taken over a skeleton of it to be worshipped at the beginning of all ritual undertakings, but have replaced the name of the Sun by that of their own deity.[3] Hence one comes across numerous forms of the Gāyatrī-mantra. This is just a single example; for Tantrics have adopted many other Vedic *mantras*, often without any change whatsoever, or with only slight modifications. Another important rite modelled on a Vedic rite is the fire-sacrifice (*homa*).

What needs to be stressed is the fact that Tantrics continue to ascribe value to the normative Hindu religious rites and if, as belonging to the higher castes, they are obliged to perform these, they do so alongside performing their own obligatory Tantric duties. What is more, they may even give priority to the normative ritual in preference to their own. For instance, persons who have received the standard sacrament of initiation and the sacred thread (*upavīta*), must first observe *sandhyārcanā*.[3a] Since the Tantric type is obviously a copy of the Smārta, it is difficult to understand the reason

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[2] See p. 111.

[3] E.g. the Tārā Gāyatrī: *aiṃ bhagavaty ekajaṭe vidmahe vikaṭadaṃṣṭre dhīmahi tannatāre pracodayāt.*

[3a] i.e. the normative one.

for the double performance. A possible explanation is that the theology of the Goddess-worshipping Tantric religion had already firmly imprinted its precepts, code of religious behaviour and duties on its followers long before these were recorded in Tantric texts. Meanwhile, the synthesizing process of Purāṇic and other mythological and historical influences had also been busy infusing Tantric ritual with the prevalent practices of standard Hinduism. The rites practised by Tantrics today are based on texts recorded not much earlier than the fourteenth century of the Christian era. By that time, Tantrics had quite forgotten the source of some of the rites they were performing, and devoutly adhered to the practices they had been taught to follow as belonging to their *paramparā*. So they performed all the religious duties obligatory for their caste, and at the same time never questioned observing all religious duties imposed by their *paramparā*.

There may be another explanation which is admittedly purely hypothetical. The more sophisticated Goddess-worshipping Tantrics tend to treat all their ritual performances as strictly esoteric, and aim at conforming with the dictum that "one should behave like a Vaiṣṇava in court (or company), like a Śaiva in ordinary life, and like a Tantric proper only in strict privacy". "Like a Śaiva" presumably means here that Tantrics should behave in the same way as standard Śaivas following the normative religion. Generally speaking the latter worship the group of five deities : Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Goddess, the Sun and Gaṇeśa, with Śiva as their chosen chief god. But it is perfectly permissible for them to select any of the five as their supreme deity. Since Tantrics are urged to keep their religious beliefs secret, they may well have a motive for openly following the standard religious practices of the worship of the five (*pañcāyatana pūjā*) of their society to conform with caste behaviour.

Classifications

As previously stated, the classical division of Hindu ritual, viz. Vaidikī, Tāntrikī and Miśra (Vedic, Tantric and a synthesized form, see BhāgPur. II, 27, 7) is purely theoretical and never actually observed in practice. All we can say is that there is the normative Hindu ritual as well as the other forms of it containing a vast amount of variations. Tantric ritualism belongs to the latter category, and henceforth we can ignore the classical classification altogether.

In dealing with Tantric ritualism, once again we see how closely it has been modelled on the normative ritualism. Following the latter's example, Tantrics divide their ritual practices into three groups : *nitya*, *naimittika* and *kāmya*. Nitya covers the group of rites regarded as being compulsory for a Tantric to perform every day; naimittika rites are observed on particular

occasions; and kāmya rites are performed to fulfil a special wish, or to avert a great misfortune.

The first group, nitya-karman, has two subdivisions: 1. *Āhnika-karman* or activities very much resembling the caste duties of the normative Hindu religion. We discussed them above and shall presently enumerate the Tāntric innovations therein. 2. The daily worship of the Goddess. This is actually the important part of nitya karman and is termed *nitya-pūjā*. A detailed description of this pūjā will enable us to detect the basic structure of Tantric ritualism and at the same time reveal its specifically Tantric features. The performance of nityapūjā and other daily religious obligations brings no special merit to the performer, nor does it avert any particular bad luck. The Tantric has to observe these rites in order to conform to the religious discipline to which he belongs. Naimittika-pūjā on the other hand is an elaborate form of worship, in which all the functions of the daily pūjā are observed in greater detail. This is in fact considered to be the complete pūjā, whereas nitya-pūjā is regarded as an abridgement of it.

Tantrics perform naimittika pūjā only on special occasions known as parvas, which are usually the eighth and eleventh of the dark fortnight, the new- and full-moon days, the last or the first day of every month, the deity's special annual festival, the birthday of the Tantric's guru, and the festivals of pavitrāropaṇa and damanārohaṇa (KT. X. 78; PKS p. 280). We shall describe these later on. All these pūjās have special names such as tithi-pūjā, māsa-pūjā and parva-pūjā, etc. Unlike nitya-pūjā, naimittika-pūjā is invariably performed in the late evening (KT. X 1,8); but the time selected has nothing to do with secrecy. As now practised, one tends to think that the main reason for performing these rites in the evening is that then the Tantric has more time and the peaceful atmosphere needed for performing a long drawn-out series of rites with great care and concentration. One has to remember that every part of the ritual has to be performed without a mistake, because only faultless performance brings the desired result. A complete pūjā is regarded as an organic whole, and faulty performance in any part of it is a defect disfiguring the whole pūjā.

Kāmya-pūjā covers a completely different category of rites. A special pūjā-programme is undertaken in order to obtain particular benefits, either for the sādhaka (practiser) himself, or on behalf of somebody else. These rites are also known as ṣaṭkarman (infra pp. 159 ff.). They can be performed during the day or during the night, depending on the nature of the purpose envisaged (KT XI,8). It is important to know that only the performer of the daily pūjā is eligible to perform naimittika-pūjā, and he who is capable of performing both is entitled to perform kāmya-pūjā (e.g. KT. XVI,

8f.). The reason is obvious. Only a Tantric firmly embedded in his tradition is entrusted to perform these special rituals that aim at mobilizing the divine Power for fulfilment of a specific purpose. These rites verge on magic in the sense that, if performed without a flaw, they will automatically produce the desired result. But their potency is only aroused when they are performed by someone in whom the divine power has been awakened (KT. XVI,8). That means that, at least once in his lifetime, the performer of the rite has had direct experience of absolute illumination, i.e. of the Divine as identified with himself. This experience is obtained only through prolonged practice in performing rituals and by meditating on the mantra of one's iṣṭadevatā (YHT I,3-4 and II,1). After a lengthy period of intensive daily practice of pūjā, meditation and mantra-japa (repetition of the mantra of the iṣṭadevatā, also called *puraścaraṇa*, see below), the Tantric receives[4] the awakening of this divine power within himself, if and when his iṣṭadevatā is moved to grant him her grace. By then he is sufficiently self-disciplined to prevent misuse of this cosmic power, which he can now direct at will.

Tantric definitions for these three types of pūjā, namely *nitya*, *naimittika* and *kāmya*, are *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa* respectively, which clearly reveal the Tantric evaluation of these (Bhāskararāya, comm. on BhāvUp.). *Nitya-pūjā* is a manifestation of the Tantric's devotion to his iṣṭadevatā and is performed without any ulterior motive. The deity, whose presence is a living fact for the Tantric, must be treated in the only realistic way he spontaneously thinks of. Therefore, nitya-pūjā is classified as the purest form of pūjā (*sāttvika*). This spontaneity is somewhat lacking in naimittika-pūjā. The Tantric is much more self-conscious while performing it and, besides, other people are often present. This elaborate form of pūjā entails much more dynamism, and that inevitably reduces the performer's tranquillity, which is so vital for awareness of his identity with the deity. Therefore *naimittika-pūjā* is described as *rājasa* — a mixture of purity and impurity. It is pure because it is performed without ulterior motive; at the same time it is impure because it tends to defeat the Tantric's main objective of merging himself in his deity.

Kāmya-pūjā, on the other hand, is frankly classified as obviously impure (tāmasa) since it is invariably performed with a finite earthly motivation. *Kāmya-pūjā* undoubtedly posed a problem for Tantric ideology. Its importance in the general pattern of ritual is undeniable, but it stands in glaring opposition to the Tantric objective of the votary's perfection and self-liberation. All the

[4] Although this is an experience, the word 'receive' is used because Tantrics regard this experience as a divine gift coming down (as it were from heaven): śaktipāta.

cautionary remarks about who is eligible to perform kāmya-pūjā and so forth are signs of this mental uneasiness on the part of the later authors of Tantra texts (e.g. Gandharva Tantra xxii, 14), who sought to systematize the conglomerate of Tantric religious phenomena.

Further Tantric classification is based on the various aspects of the deity worshipped. Bhāskararāya has classified pūjā in three groups: āntara, japa and bāhya respectively, meaning internal or mental pūjā, muttering of the mantra, and actual offerings made to the deity, according to the supreme, subtle and gross aspects of the deity (Bhāṣya on the BhāvUp. I). The order of sequence in this classification is somewhat arbitrary, since in actual practice japa comes at the end of *āntara-* and *bāhya-pūjā*. Otherwise the classification fits the nature of these three distinct parts of a complete ritual worship of the deity that precede meditation. The main characteristic of bāhya-pūjā is that it involves physical acts as well as the use of material objects by the votary. Further analysis reveals that the nature of this form of pūjā takes into account many external factors. The votary needs to take physical measures to be clean and pure; the place of worship needs to be consecrated in order to receive the iconic or aniconic symbol of the deity, which is after all a gross form of the divine; the offerings themselves presuppose some form of the acceptance of material objects by the deity. So here the votary serves the deity with his entire person, with deeds both physical and mental — in Indian terms these would be of three forms, namely efforts of *kāya* (body), *vāk* (speech) and *manas* (mind) — and with all that he holds precious, such as his honour, loyalty, devotion, sensual pleasure, etc.

At the japa stage, most of the external physical activities are left behind. The votary uses a rosary or his fingers to keep count; the deity is conceived as identical with the mantra he is repeating, and no symbol is used; only the vocal organ and auditory sense are used. The latter two only function at the beginning of japa, when the votary performs his japa just audibly to himself. After a while, the repetition takes place only in the mind and hardly any count is kept. Thus the use of external tangible matter has been dispensed with, although the role of the rosary betrays some symbolic representation of Word/Letter (any complete system of letters is called *mālinī* and the rosary is usually referred to as *mālā*). While performing japa, the votary interiorizes the deity and envisages her as identified with his own self as well as with the complete set of Sanskrit letters (*mantra-mātṛkā*, or fountainhead of all mantras). Just as the Tantric's iṣṭadevatā is a special manifestation of the one and absolute divine Being, so also is his iṣṭamantra a manifestation of the *mantra-mātṛkā* (see p. 97). The votary evidently employs far less physical

activity in japa than he does while performing bāhya-pūjā. Therefore this form of adoring the deity is regarded as subtler than bāhya-pūjā. The third form of pūjā, namely āntara-pūjā, is mainly contemplative. The worshipper interiorizes the whole of the external pūjā with a strong tendency to idealize its concrete elements by transforming them into ontological abstractions such as the five basic elements, mind, etc.

This mode of adoration calls for a well-developed capacity for vivid visualization and sound philosophical training in the ability to form abstractions out of concrete material objects and physical activities. These faculties demand rigorous concentration and this form of worship is held in higher esteem than any other, so that it is considered to be the supreme form of worship. It is the first stepping-stone to meditation — i.e. the stage that leads to the ecstatic experience of bliss. The idea at the root of this is that the further one progresses in spirituality, the less need there is for elaborate methods of pūjā. The point finally reached being that all ritual activities — whether actually performed, or lifted to the contemplative plane and interiorized — simply become unnecessary, and all effort on the part of the votary then becomes a ritual form of worship. As Abhinavagupta puts it (TĀ IV, 120cd-121ab) 'whatever sensual pleasure (the Tantric) derives by using any of his senses, he attaches the pleasures to the supreme Being and it becomes an item of offering (to the deity)'. This very assertion that there is no distinction between the votary's own sensation of pleasure and the pleasure of his deity makes the monistic (advaita) stand-point clear to the Tantric. The whole point of performing āntara-pūjā is to gradually establish this notion in the mind of the Tantric and keep him constantly aware of it. In a certain sense, he is then worshipping his own self elevated to the level of, and immersed in, his deity with offerings which are, in reality, not different from that same deity (LT 36, 81-85).

A similar type of classification is found in some Tantra texts. Rituals are either divided into groups according to the three descriptive states of the deity's gradual secession from indivisible absoluteness: *niṣkala* or undifferentiated, *sakalaniṣkala* or undifferentiated and at the same time differentiated, and *sakala* or differentiated; or they are divided into another group of three that is descriptive of the deity in relation to her ontological position, namely *para* (infinite), *parāpara* (infinite and at the same time finite), and *apara* (finite) (YHT III,2).

It is important to understand that these classifications concern the different forms of rites which go to make up Tantric ritual as a whole. Although Tantrics worship many forms or manifestations of the goddess, the modes of worshipping Ṣoḍaśī (Śrī) on the one hand and Kālī/Tārā on the

other are the best documented. Since worship of the first form has received the most efficient and systematic treatment and enjoys the most popularity amongst all Tantrics, excepting in the eastern and possibly extreme south-western regions of India, it is best to deal with that first, It should then be easier to revert to the mode of worshipping Kālī by showing the points of difference.

The texts regarded today — or rather for about the last two hundred years — as being the most important, are the Paraśurāma-kalpasūtra, the Paramānanda Tantra, the Pūjāratna written by Śyāmarāja Dīkṣita, the Parānanda Tantra and the Gandharva Tantra. The first and last mentioned of these are popular in the southern regions of India. The Tantrics of Vārāṇasī generally follow the ritual mode laid down in the Paramānanda Tantra, while the Pūjāratna is popular in the region of Mathurā. The Paraśurāma KS. is a quasi-aphoristic (*sūtra*) work attempting to codify the modes of Tantric ritualism and the cult of Tripurā, and give them an official status side by side with the vast Vedic literature on ritual, the Kalpasūtras. It deals with the following items: 1. *āhnika-karma*, or the daily routine duties of a Tantric; 2. *saparyā*, or the ritual worship of the goddess; 3. *homa*, or the fire sacrifice; 4. *mudrā*, or hand- and body-postures; 5. *nyāsa*; 6. *japa*; and 7. *naimittika-pūjā*. The text also deals with astrology, though very sketchily, in order to determine the most suitable moment for starting a ritual; with different forms of initiation and its various stages; and with the worship of different deities.[5]

Āhnika-karma

At the time of initiation, a Tantric gets complete and detailed instructions about his daily duties. This lays down a regular way of life for him. It should be remembered that his first aim is to arrive at directly experiencing the complete identity of 1) his iṣṭadevatā, 2) his iṣṭa-mantra, 3) his guru, and 4) his own self. What is strongly impressed on him from the very beginning is the fact that in being accepted by his guru, who is in fact the deity herself manifest on earth as guru, he has obtained his first experience of divine grace.[6] And henceforth all along the Tantric's path towards his

[5] We have based our descriptions of pūjā mainly on this text with its offshoot the Nityotsava, where necessary supplemented by other texts.

[6] Technically this is known as *Śaktipāta* (descent of divine Power). It is said to come to the Tantric as a result of God's compassion and ardour. This is envisaged as a projection of divine love manifest. See footnote on p. 126.

ultimate goal his guru comes first. Therefore upon waking and while still in bed, a Tantric should sit up and meditate on his guru in the company of his consort as representing the Two-in-One state of the Divine. While envisaging this celestial state of his guru and his śakti, he offers the mantra of salutation to them, and then recites the five verses in praise of his guru which are called the *Pādukāpañcakam*. By declaring his total submission and loyalty to his guru, he thus confirms his solidarity with Tantric ideology. He then envisages his guru in the middle of the lotus of a thousand petals (meaning of course innumerable petals), which is situated on top of the crown (*sahasrāra padma* at the *dvādaśānta*).

His next step is to envisage his own self (*kuṇḍalinī*) — usually situated at the bottom of his spinal column (*mūlādhārā*) near his genitals — as a manifestation of his goddess suddenly rising up like a flash of red lightning through the suṣumṇā channel to reach the sahasrāra at the top of his head. This visualization occurs while he practises prāṇāyāma (rhythmic method of inhaling, holding the breath, and exhaling). *Sahasrāra* is the centre where the supreme deity and his guru are perpetually situated in union (see p. 170), and this short practice of meditation brings to his mind the fundamental unity of his own self with the deity and with his guru. He also envisages the letters of the *bīja* of his iṣṭa-mantra engraved in appropriate colours on the first three centres through which the kuṇḍalinī passes on its lightning flight to the *sahasrāra* (see below). On reaching the *sahasrāra* he imbues the *amṛta* existing there, which is another way of envisaging the bliss inherent in the supreme deity. The whole of this imagery links up with several religious concepts. The lotus is always a symbol of purity. Its thousand petals present its infinite nature which, though depicted as the abode of the deity, is none other than the deity herself. To complete the imagery, the goddess is envisaged in the centre of the pericarp of that lotus and being a flower, the lotus naturally contains honey — in this case *amṛta*. But this *amṛta* has no resemblance whatever to the mythical amṛta of Hindu religion. Here it is bliss indeed, permeating the godhead and in fact identical with the goddess. Thus, being once — however passively — reminded of, or rather having contemplated on this ultimate identity of his own self with bliss, the Tantric indirectly gets a taste of that bliss, which is represented by the more or less actual sensation of being bathed in, or saturated with, *amṛta*. Thus totally redeemed from all impurity, he starts his day in peace and confidence.

Next follows the usual process of scrupulously going through the round of observing hygienic habits that culminates in the ritual bath. Up to this point, each Tantric follows the rules of his own caste. The bath however differs from the usual Hindu bath, in that the Tantric takes several forms

of bath, one after another.[7] These are called *mantra-snāna* (mantra-bath), *bhasma-snāna* (ash-bath), and so forth. As a group, these different forms of ritual bathing are called special baths (*viśeṣa-snāna*).

The Tantric bath

After the usual ritual bath with oil, riverbed-clay and bathing in deep water, whilst still standing in the water the Tantric takes water in his cupped hand, sips it three times and pours back what remains into the water he stands in. With the appropriate mantras he then purifies his six important limbs (*aṅga*), viz. *śiras* (head), *śikhā* (topknot), *netra* (eyes), *hṛdaya* (heart), *astra* (weapon) and *karatala-pṛṣṭha* (palms and backs of his hands), by touching each in turn with his hands and making the appropriate gestures (*mudrā*). Next, he utters the sacred sound '*kroṃ*' and, hooking the fingers of his right hand in imitation of a goad, he evokes sacred water from the orb of the sun, repeats the bīja-mantra of his iṣṭadevatā ten times, and envisages the transformation of the ordinary water into sacred water followed by throwing that water into the actual water while forming a gesture with his hands to resemble a *yoni* (the female sex-organ). After that, with his hands he first makes the gesture (*mudrā*) of *dhenu* (drawing milk from the uddders of the celestial cow, which symbolically transforms the water into *amṛta*), followed by the gesture of *yoni* (symbolizing that the water is primordial water). Next he consecrates the water with the mantra '*aiṃ*' and repeats it ten times. He then envisages his iṣṭadevatā in that water, which has now become blissful *amṛta*, and consecrates this *amṛta* by repeating his *iṣṭa-mantra* ten times (*abhimantraṇa*). He then sprinkles himself seven times with this consecrated water which he envisages to be issuing from the goddess's exquisitely beautiful mouth. Then he repeats his iṣṭa-mantra twenty-one times, whilst simultaneously taking three dips in the water which he envisages to be a stream of *amṛta* issuing from the goddess's feet. Thereafter he again anoints himself thrice or seven times with the water, his hand held in the gesture of *yoni*. Emerging from the water, he wraps himself in two pieces of clean cloth (one as loin-cloth, the other as scarf), and decorates his forehead with consecrated ash from the sacrificial fire by making the sacred mark of '*tripuṇḍra*' (three horizontal darts).

[7] See ŚT p. 127 with Rāghavabhaṭṭa's comm. Amongst Tantrics there are somewhat divergent views about the form and number of these baths.

Tantric aghamarṣaṇa

The Tantric form of *aghamarṣaṇa* (removal of all sins) differs from the Vedic *aghamarṣaṇa* in that it does not use any Vedic mantra (for Vedic *aghamarṣaṇa* see Brāhmaṇasarvasva p. 99ff. and P. V. Kane, *History*, vol. IV, p. 130).

The Tantric takes a handful of water and performs prāṇāyāma while visualizing that the water in his hand is being inhaled and passes down through his iḍā-channel to reach the far end of the left side of his torso, where apparently sins lurk. He envisages wrenching these out and exhaling them through his piṅgalā-channel together with the inhaled water which has turned black, and by returning that water to his palm rids himself of all sins.

Tantric sandhyā

After observing the ordinary worship of *sandhyā*, the Tantric invokes the goddess who resides in the sun and offers her three libations of water while uttering the Vedic *gāyatrī*. Then he repeats the *gāyatrī-mantra* of his iṣṭadevatā (e.g. Ṣoḍaśī-gāyatrī) for a number of times.

Tantric tarpaṇa

After *aghamarṣaṇa*, the Tantric resumes his usual routine and starts his *tarpaṇa* (water-libation). He first follows the Vedic form, i.e. to offer *tarpaṇa* to all gods and to one's ancestors.[8] But before offering *tarpaṇa* to the Sun-God (*sūryārghya*), he offers it to his iṣṭadevatā and her entire retinue of āvaraṇadevatās etc. He does this by tracing on the water the basic yantra. He draws a triangle, puts a circle around it and encloses that within a square boundary and then offers libations to these deities. The final *tarpaṇa* is offered to the Sun-god. Last of all he recalls his identity with the Absolute Reality by uttering the formula '*haṃsaḥ so 'haṃ*' (see Ch. IV p. 110), and then envisages returning the sacred water to the sun. Thus purified, he proceeds to the actual place of worship in absolute silence.

Comparing these three rites, viz. snāna, sandhyā and tarpaṇa as prescribed by the Tantra texts with those prescribed by the Vedic tradition, we see that the former introduce elements that are specifically Tantric. In the ritual snāna (bath), we noticed that the water has to be envisaged as drawn from the sun, which is but one aspect of the goddess symbolizing her omniscience (see

[8] BrS, pp. 116-123.

LT XXIX,7-70 to understand how the goddess is represented as Sūrya, Soma and Agni). The water is consecrated by tracing a *yantra* and showing a few consecratory *mudrās*. The element of vivid imagery is brought in too for the contemplative transformation of ordinary empirical things into spiritual ideas in order to create a separate dimension of existence. And so, through vivid imagination accompanied by certain acts, a Tantric effectively lifts his dimension of existence from the ordinary worldly level to the spiritual level and achieves the same state of existence as his deity. What is noteworthy is that he does not reject anything, but just transmutes everything by aid of something akin to drama. Although he is the sole actor — provided he has the necessary imagination, propensity and experience — with forceful imagery he is able to create a completely different world (a cosmic existence let us say), which he shares with the goddess. The aghamarṣaṇa rite is an instance of this. The water exhaled, carrying away all the Tantric's sins, is conceived to be black; and sometimes sins are collectively envisaged as an anthropomorphic being (*pāpapuruṣa*) who is as black as soot. The intensity of such an imagination enables the Tantric to feel these events to be quite real, and they affect him far more deeply than, say, the Vedic ritual of *aghamarṣaṇa* can ever do. Incidentally, Vedic *aghamarṣaṇa* is always accompanied by a couple of hymns collectively called *aghamarṣaṇa-sūktas* (ṚV, X 190,1-3), and is only performed on certain occasions, not daily, (the Brāhmaṇasarvasva mentions another rite, *drupada*, which bears close resemblance to Tantric *aghamarṣaṇa*).[9]

In the performance of *sandhyā* and *tarpaṇa*, again we encounter another aspect of Tantric religion, namely its monotheism. That is why the ordinary *sandhyā* is followed by the repetition of the goddess's *Gāyatrī-mantra* and, besides offering *tarpaṇa* to the ordinary Vedic gods, sages and one's ancestors, the Tantric offers it to his iṣṭadevatā and her retinue in exactly the same order as is followed in the daily worship of the goddess. Furthermore, the Tantric finally declares his total identity with the Absolute reality, albeit in a cursory manner.

The Tantric form of *tarpaṇa* makes clear that, in spite of being monotheistic, the Tantric does not consider that his is the only deity that exists, denying thereby the existence of any other. To the contrary, he recognizes the existence of other deities, especially those belonging to the goddess's pantheon which does in fact make it possible to include almost every conceivable divinity. The crucial point is that the existence of these deities is considered

[9] loc. cit.

to depend entirely on that of the goddess, whose manifestations they are; and it should be remembered that the goddess — in full regalia with all her retinue — is always invoked in formal worship. This is where the *sāmpradāyika* (observing the Tantric sampradāya form of ritual worship) differs from the normative (*smārta*) form. Therefore, even in performing as simple a rite as tarpaṇa, a *yantra* has to be drawn to indicate that the specially consecrated and protected area has been made worthy for the descent of the goddess (ŚT p. 154, line 19 comm.),[10] and her attendants, bodyguard etc. are invoked and treated with the respect due to a sovereign's retinue.

Place of worship

The criterion for a suitable place for worship is that it should be unpolluted and quiet. Some texts give a list of such places: holy places, banks of rivers, caves, hilltops, places visited by pilgrims, water-resorts, near the confluence of a river, sacred woods, lonely gardens, under a bilva tree (aegle marmelos/ woodapple), on the slope of a hill, in a tulasī (sacred basil) grove, cowstall in which there is no ox, Śiva temple, in the shade of such trees as the aśvattha (sacred fig tree) or āmalakī (emblic myrobalan), a cowherd-village near water, a temple, seashore, one's own house, or the house of one's guru (ŚT 2, 138-139). Sites such as cremation-grounds etc. are also recommended for Tantric pūjā, especially in Kālī worship. Mostly pūjās connected with *puraścaraṇa* and *abhicāra* (p. 159-61) are performed outside home, while other pūjās are generally performed in front of the family altar at home, which is strictly guarded from pollution.

Nitya-pūjā (preliminary rites)

The next important daily duty of a Tantric is the worship of his deity. This major ritual act, which reveals the essential character of Tantric worship, is divided into several units. The first of these entails the purification (*śuddhi*) of everything involved in the worship and necessitates performing five consecratory acts (*śuddhi*) concerning 1) the Tantric's self; 2) the place (*sthāna*) of worship; 3) the mantra used; 4) all utensils and objects (*dravya*) used for the offering; and 5) the deity (*devatā*) worshipped (KT VI,16).

Before going into the details of these, it should be pointed out that to understand the method of Tantric ritual it is necessary to classify the rites comprised in a fully developed Tantric pūjā under three main heads. The

[10] Often in Tantric circles *yantra*, *mantra* and *devatā* are homologised, and the one is incomplete without the others; ŚT pp. 154f.

first of these is the group of purificatory rites; the second group covers precautionary measures aimed at removing obstacles or preventing interference from malevolent agents; and the third group deals with the actual pūjā ceremony in which gifts are offered to the deity. Now all five of these consecratory acts fall under the first group of rites in a pūjā which deals with the purification of everything used in the worship, whereas some of these acts also fall under the second group of precautionary measures. The remaining ceremonies are listed amongst the rites that concern the offering of gifts to the deity. Of all the consecrations, the first — the consecration of the Tantric's self — is of most interest to us as it illustrates the central attitude of Tantrism. Observance of this rite qualifies the Tantric to invoke the deity to be worshipped, and at the same time it covers a wide range of minor rites concerning the Tantric's daily obligatory religious duties, namely *snāna*, *aghamarṣaṇa*, *tarpaṇa* and *sandhyārcana*. Once the Tantric completes his tarpaṇa, he proceeds in absolute silence to the place where he performs his daily worship (*Tantrasāra*, p. 230). This is a sign that he has already withdrawn himself from his mundane reality and is seeking to attain that other dimension of reality that he shares with his deity. When about to enter the site of worship, he performs the precautionary rite of invoking and worshipping the guardians of the goddess's abode and gate of her cosmic residence. But even before that, he invokes the Sun-God and worships him with a simple offering of water and a few grains of rice smeared with sandalwood. The Sun is invoked to act as chief witness of the Tantric's performance since that god is universally regarded as the witness of good deeds (*lokasākṣī*). Then guardian-deities such as Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Śrī, Vaṭuka, Kṣetrapāla and the like are invoked in order to safeguard entrance by the door of the place of worship. Hence this should be regarded as one of the precautionary rites. At the same time the Tantric consecrates the door by thrice sprinkling consecrated water on it while uttering his *iṣṭa-mantra* (see p. 129). He consecrates this water by filling a jug with clean water brought from some holy source while pronouncing the *hṛd-mantra* (of the six limbs),[11] and then repeats his *iṣṭa-mantra* a couple of times as prescribed by his guru. This is accompanied by the gesture of the *dhenu-mudrā*, whereby he envisages the changing of the water into *amṛta*. This consecrated water known as *sāmānyārghya* is prepared as soon as the Tantric completes his *tarpaṇa* and is used for purposes of consecration

[11] There are six limbs (aṅga), viz. hṛd (heart), śiras (head), śikhā (topknot), netra (eyes), astra (weapon) and kavaca (armour or torso). Note that the last one differs from the last mentioned in the list given on p. 131.

throughout the performance of his *pūjā* (see TanS p. 231 and ŚT pp. 230-231). Here we have an instance of how the three groups of rites mentioned above constantly overlap, and this recurs all through the performance. The traditional divisions of a Tantric pūjā are six, viz. *dhyāna* (meditation), *pūjā* (offering), *japa*, *homa* (fire-sacrifice), *nyāsa* and *tarpaṇa*.

Ātmaśuddhi[12] has to be performed by every Tantric before he can start his pūjā. Only a minor part of this rite, the āhnika section, entails physical acts; the major part involves two of the most important features of Tantric rites, namely *bhūtaśuddhi* (consecrating one's physical body) and *nyāsa* (transmutation and accommodation). These concern the process of the sādhaka's sublimation and spriritual transformation. The worshipper first salutes his teacher (guru) and then Gaṇeśa. Then using his yogic technique and his highly developed powers of imagination and concentration, the Tantric practiser envisages all the ontological realities that go to make up his personality. He then proceeds to envisage within himself the process of cosmic creation (evolution) in reverse order (i.e. cosmic involution). He follows every single step, imagining the dissolution of each element into its preceding cause, until in the end he is ultimately dissolved or immersed in his cosmic source. He then envisages his own resurrection, retracing each step of cosmic creation. Only now, having burned away with cosmic fire and blown away with cosmic air all his human imperfections and limitations, he experiences bliss and, permeated with it, remains immersed in the cosmic source. He actually pictures himself as bathed in *amṛta*. He now has a body made of pure substance (*sāttvika*) identical with that of the deity's and he is free to invite her to descend into it — to invoke the divine ego to descend on to his ego.

Needless to say, mantras play a central role in the Tantric procedure of translating ontological realities into ritual acts. Each reality is represented by a seed-(*bīja*) mantra, and visual imagery is also provided for each. Thus, having envisaged the cosmic drama of the final cataclysm followed by cosmic creation, the Tantric ensures his identification with the cosmic goddess (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*). The next stage of the rite of *ātmaśuddhi* is *nyāsa*. He accommodates the divine form, limb by limb, in his own body.[13]

He then proceeds to house the entire cosmos within his body, by conceiving it to be the divine mansion wherein all the attendant deities and the entire galaxy are present. He also accommodates in his body the mātṛkā (letters) mantras, their seers, and ritual application (the latter items are

[12] See also KT, VI, 17.

[13] *Ṣaḍaṅganyāsa* starting with *karanyāsa*, *vyāpaka nyāsa*, *ṣodhānyāsa*, *aṇimā* etc., *siddhinyāsa* and *mūladevinyāsa*. These are most important (YHT III,58-62).

obviously an imitation of Vedic tradition). Each act of nyāsa is accompanied by a salutation to the object of the act, and the Tantric pronounces the mystic syllable representing the seedmantra each time he vividly envisages the actual placing of that object on a part of his body.[14] At the end of this process, his body has been lifted into the mystic world of the goddess, in the centre of which, in the lotus-sanctuary within the mysterious bejewelled island, she holds her court (see ŚT. p. 9). The rite of inviting the goddess to descend in the heart of the worshipper, which is envisaged as the lotus-seat and is performed after *bhūtaśuddhi*, has already effected the worshipper's essential transformation into divine personality (ŚT., p. 137-8).

Sthānaśuddhi and *dravyaśuddhi*, on the other hand, mostly contain rites of a precautionary nature to ward off evil spirits and other malevolent agencies. These may try to pollute the site or other ingredients of the pūjā, and thereby rob it of its validity as a whole. Many lesser gods and spirits are invoked and offered gifts to ensure correct and safe performance of the pūjā, to protect the premises and the performer, as well as to safeguard that the merit envisaged shall be duly awarded. Some of these rites are reconciliatory, e.g., invoking the lord of the terrain (*kṣetrapāla*) and offering food to the spirits (*bhūta-bali*). There are others in which divine protection is sought by envisaging a material representation of the deity's most terrifying manifestation (Vaṭuka, Yoginīs), or typical weapon (arrows, etc.). In the rite of *digbandhana* (enclosing the site of worship within a fixed boundary), the Tantric envisages a magic boundary, consisting of arrows (*nārāca*) shot by the goddess as surrounding the whole area. Similar acts are casting a glowering look around to disperse aerial spirits, stamping the floor three times to drive away any spirits lurking there, and snapping the fingers — thus making menacing noises to frighten off undesirable elements. There are mantras, too, commanding spirits to disappear on the authority of the deity (*apasarpantu*, etc.). The site and all the objects used in the pūjā are sprinkled with consecrated water, and all such acts are accompanied by appropriate hand-gestures (*mudrās*), e.g. *nārāca-mudrā*, *chotikā-mudrā*, *avaguṇṭhana-mudrā*, *paramīkaraṇa-mudrā*, etc. (see p. 116).

Needless to say, the actual cleaning and scrubbing of the site and of all the utensils and objects used in the ritual have to be done very thoroughly. Moreover, whenever possible the site should be decorated. But usually all

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[14] The sixfold nyāsa (*ṣoḍhā-nyāsa*) of Gaṇeśa, *graha* (planets), *nakṣatra* (stars), Yoginī, *rāśi* (constellations) and *pīṭha*, and the great sixfold *nyāsa* of *prapañca* (world), *bhuvana* (universe), *mūrti*, *mantra*, *devatā*, and *mātṛkā* (8) are considered important in the worship of Śrī. *Ṣoḍhā-nyāsa* is used for the worship of *śrī-yantra* (YHT III-8ff). The great ṣoḍhā-nyāsa is mainly used in the worship of Ardhanārīśvara.

that has been seen to long before starting the precautionary rites. Thus the physical cleaning of *ātman*, *sthāna* and *dravya* does not take place at the same time as the contemplative and symbolic cleansings are performed. It was completed before the rite of door-worship is observed. After that, the symbolic cleansing is undertaken by sprinkling the consecrated water three times accompanied by recitation of the *iṣṭa-mantra* and the *mantra* of the weapon (*astra*) and, in the case of the practitioner, by his taking three sips of that water from his cupped hand and then touching both his ears and shoulders.

The other two consecrations, viz. *mantraśuddhi* and *devatāśuddhi*, are effected solely by contemplative and symbolic means. The main mantra is consecrated by uttering all fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet before and after the mantra. The whole mantra thus protected is repeated twice, once in straightforward order and then in reverse order (KT VI, 19).[15] The deity is consecrated more elaborately. After having invoked and welcomed her, she is placed on the sacred seat. When assured that she is comfortable and prepared to accept his offerings, the Tantric draws a magic circle (by tracing a circle around her whilst uttering a mantra: the *avaguṇṭhana-mudrā*).

He then performs the rite of *sakalīkaraṇa* (giving the deity a finite form composed of parts) by uttering the appropriate mantra and displaying the relevant mudrā. Next, he performs the nyāsa of the deity's six main limbs (*aṅga*). After that, he repeats his *iṣṭa-mantra* three times, the *dīpanī-mantra* once, and the *mātṛkā-mantra* once, shows the *dhenu-mudrā*, and sprinkles *arghya*-water on the deity thus visualized. Although generally speaking this concludes the rites of consecration, sometimes certain other forms of consecration are added to these before starting on the actual offerings. On entering the place of worship. the Tantric lights a lamp and worships it as the lord of lamps (*dīpanātha*).[16] He then requests the earth to permit him to sit on her, and after consecrating his three tattvas (ātman, vidyā and Śiva tattva) and other cosmic realities making up his physical existence (thirty-six in number, see p. 52), he takes a little hemp.[17] Next, he arranges in front of himself all the flowers and utensils etc. that are to be used in the pūjā (see also Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, pp. 246-247, 251, 254-256 and the notes thereon).

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[15] It should be noted that there are diverse methods of mantraśuddhi of which only one is mentioned here.

[16] See YHT III, 170 and ŚT p. 132 with the commentary on the importance of *kuladīpa*.

[17] This must be a rather late innovation and is not widely practised (MT.V.82-88).

Image and symbols of the deity

Pūjā is offered to a deity who is represented by various symbols. These are described as the locus (*ādhāra*) of the pūjā offered (see PrT.ch.5). The symbol may be some aniconic form such as a liṅga, or a triangular pebble of black marble found in the bed of the Gaṇḍakī. It can be an image made of stone, terra cotta, crystal, any precious gem, or metal. It can be a pitcher full of water decorated with vermilion, leaves and grass. A bowl of water (*viśeṣārghya*) or a cup of alcoholic drink (*śrī-pātra*)[18] may represent the goddess; or a water-resort, books, or a plateful of flowers may be used as symbols for the deity; or a young girl (*kumārī*), a woman (*suvāsinī*) and her sex-organ may be worshipped as symbolizing the goddess.

Bhāskararāya enumerates three forms of the goddess that are worshipped: the gross, the subtle and the absolute.[19] Gross forms are those mentioned above. The mantras are the subtle forms of the goddess, while her absolute form is worshipped in the worship of one's guru and of one's own self as pervaded by the goddess. This last form of worship is found in āntara-pūjā (see p. 145). In practice however, images are very popular and are widely worshipped. But in a Tantric pūjā, the yantra of the main deity is always worshipped, while a pitcher full of water plays an almost equally important role as symbol of the goddess. A wide range of iconographic descriptions of various deities are available in Tantric literature in the dhyānas of these deities.[20] These symbols are only venerated when pervaded by the deity; otherwise they are merely physical phenomena. It is only after the Tantric has put life into them through performing special rites (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*) that they become sacred.

The pūjā programme

The various purificatory and consecratory rites have been somewhat elaborately discussed in order to emphasize their importance in the performance of a pūjā. The order in which these rites are performed both by Kaulas and by non-Kaulas in a complete pūjā-programme runs as follows:

1. Approaching the door of the sacred pūjā-area and consecrating it.
2. Precautions against three types of hindrances.

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[18] See plate 1.
[19] Comm. on BhāvUp., p. 1ff.
[20] See for instance: D. C. Sircar, Text and Translation: *Tantrasāradhṛta dhyānamālā*. JAIH, Vol. VI. parts 1-2, 1972-73, Calcutta, pp. 186-278.

3. Worship of Vāstupuruṣa (guardian of the divine abode) and other rites to safeguard and consecrate the place of worship.
4. Purification of the worshipper's seat (*āsana*).
5. Worship of the *guru-paṅkti* (original line of gurus) and of Gaṇeśa.
6. Pūjā of the sun-god.
7. Drawing the cakra or yantra, symbol of the divine abode.
8. Meditation on the goddess s abode.
9. *Bhūtaśuddhi* and other related rites.
10. *Ātma-prāṇapratiṣṭhā*, or meditating on the replacement of the worshipper's mundane self by his divine self.
11. *Prāṇāyāma*, or practice of controlled breathing exercises.
12. Nyāsa.
13. Dhyāna (meditation on the deity) and the showing of mudrās.
14. Āntarayāga (interiorized worship).
15. A. Preparing the viśeṣārghya (water used for special consecration) and
    B. arranging containers for offering drinks to the deities etc. This second part of the rite is followed by the Vāma and Kaula Tantrics.
16. Bāhya-pūjā (physical worship).
17. *Ṣaḍaṅga-pūjā* (worship of the six parts of the deity's body).[21]
18. Worship of the Nityās.
19. Worship of the three groups (*ogha*) of gurus, namely the divine group (*divyaugha*), the siddha group (*siddhaugha*) and the human group (*mānavaugha*).
20. Worship of the deities of the main goddess's pantheon (*āvaraṇadevatā*).[22]
21. *Prāṇāhuti*,[23] or the offering of cooked and other food to the deity.
22. Offering of the kuladīpa (the kula-lamp).
23. Puṣpāñjali (offering a number of flowers).
24. Meditation on *Kāmakalā*.
25. *Homa* (fire-sacrifice).
26. Offering of *bali* and animal sacrifice.
27. *Pradakṣiṇa* (going round the deity one or more times starting from the deity's right side).
28. *Japa* (repeatedly reciting the main mantra).
29. *Stuti* (chanting eulogies of the deity).

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[21] The parts are the head, topknot, heart, eyes, weapon and armour, collectively envisaged as a separate deity called Ṣaḍaṅgayuvatī.

[22] Āvaraṇa devatās surround the main daity in concentric circles.

[23] Ritual concerning the consumption of food. Bodewitz, *Jaim Br*, p. 254-256 and appendix.

30. *Suvāsini-* or *dūti-pūjā* (worshipping a woman).[24]
31. *Cakra-* (or Bhairavīcakra) pūjā (an equal number of male and female Tantrics observing pūjā collectively).
32. *Visarjana* (leave-taking).
33. *Nirmālya-pūjā.*
34. *Kumāri-pūjā.*

Commentary

1. Approaching the place of worship, the worshipper sprinkles the door (sometimes only in imagination) with water from the sāmānyārghya-jug,[25] whilst uttering the mantra *phaṭ* (of the weapon). He worships Mahālakṣmī and Sarasvatī on the lintel; and Gaṇeśa, Kṣetrapāla, Gaṅgā and Yamunā on the sideposts of the door.

2. He banishes interfering spirits etc. from the sky by casting a glowering look around; from the atmosphere by sprinkling holy water while uttering the mantra *phaṭ*; and from the earth by striking the ground three times with his heel.

3. Entering the sacred precincts, he worships the guardian-deity of the abode and Brahmā on the north-east corner. He consecrates the entire sacred place, that has already been bedecked and cleaned with pañcagavya[26] and with arghya-water, whilst uttering the astra-mantra (*phaṭ*). He further safeguards the site by casting a glowering look around whilst uttering his main mantra and sprinkling the place with *arghya*-water. He then repeats the astra-mantra and strikes the ground with a bunch of kuśa-grass,[27] whilst uttering the same mantra. He then sprinkles the place thoroughly with consecrated water whilst uttering the *varma* (armour) mantra (*vauṣaṭ*). Finally, he burns incense, scatters popped rice, sesame-seed, sandal-wood-paste, rice, ash, darbha-grass and mustard-seed, and sweeps away all spirits while repeating the *astra-mantra*.[28]

4. He then proceeds to consecrate the place he has chosen for his seat. He envisages and utters the mantras of the three boundaries set up by fire, by Śiva's weapon, the pāśupata, and by Viṣṇu's weapon, the sudarśana-disc. He sprinkles consecrated water on the place selected for

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[24] Items 30, 31 and 34 are not parts of a general Tantric nitya pūjā.

[25] Specially consecrated water with scents etc. Throughout the pūjā only this water is used. See above.

[26] Five products from a cow: milk, curd, clarified butter, urine and dung.

[27] Saccharum Cylindrilum.

[28] Certain other mantras are also uttered in which the worshipper peremptorily orders all evil spirits and obstructive elements to clear off at Śiva's command.

his seat, and salutes the soil as vajra (thunder). Then uttering the mantra for drawing diagrams,[29] he draws a triangle with sacred water and traces the sacred letter *hsauḥ*. He worships the seat as representing the lotus, the supreme Śakti who is the locus of all (*ādhāraśakti*). He requests permission from the goddess of the earth to be allowed to sit on her and then settles himself in his seat. On sitting down, he places a jug full of water on his left side next to a bowl in which to wash his hands, and all the other items of pūjā-offerings on his right side. He consecrates his three basic principles (tattvas) viz. *Ātmatattva*, *Vidyātattva* and *Śivatattva*. Then he lights a row of lamps or only one lamp.

5. He salutes his preceptor, grand-preceptor and great-grand-preceptor and requests their permission to commence the ritual.

6-7. He worships the Sun (the supreme witness of all deeds) to witness his present endeavour. The description now given is specially relevant to the pūjā of *Śrī-cakra*. Śrī-cakra is a geometric representation of goddess Tripurā (Śrī) — a complicated diagram of nine figures and nine triangles intermingled to form a concentric figure, in which the central point is conceived as the seat of Tripurā (see page 112-3). This figure can be freshly drawn at each performance of pūjā. Otherwise it is curved out on metal plates or blocks of special stones.[30] The Goddess Tripurā is here worshipped as the source and essence of All, the Universe represented by the diagram. As this yantra of the goddess is most popularly worshipped all over India, and as there is a text in the form of a religious exegesis called Paraśurāma Kalpa Sūtra — dating from at any rate the seventeenth century of the Christian era — in which the ritual worship of Tripurā is handled systematically, this form of pūjā has been chosen by us as a model of Tantric pūjā.

The Śrī-cakra (or any other such diagram representing the deity worshipped) should be drawn with care and exact measurements, and then be consecrated. If a metal or stone Śrī-*yantra*[31] is used, it is bathed with consecrated water and with *pañcāmṛta*.[32] It is then wiped with a clean cloth and sprinkled with red powder. Then the yantra is invested with divine personality by uttering the sacred syllables and formulae declaring that the life, soul, senses, speech and mind of the divine Śrī-*cakra* are entering into this phenomenal Śrī-cakra.

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[29] This praises the lines used in geometrical figures.

[30] See plate I.

[31] Each deity's yantra is named after that particular deity.

[32] Milk, curd, butter, honey and sugar.

8. The worshipper carefully envisages the sacred abode of Śrī-cakra's presiding deity Tripurā with all its details. It is conceived as a jewelled island floating in an ocean of amṛta. On this fantastic site surrounded by gardens etc. made of precious stones, the goddess's palace stands. Inside, on a special platform decorated with four gates, is set her couch. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Īśvara hold its four legs; Sadāśiva is the plank on which her bed is spread with soft cushions. The *Śrī-yantra* is then conceived to be set on this bed and the worshipper imagines that a big curtain is drawn across in front to hide the bed. While visualizing each detail, he salutes it when mentioning it and offers it arghya (perfumed flowers and rice).

9. Now comes the time to perform the consecration of the worshipper's own self (*bhūtaśuddhi*). The details of this rite have already been discussed on pages 136f.

10. After completing *bhūtaśuddhi*, the worshipper invests his own self with divine personality. He visualizes the deity, his main mantra (iṣṭa- or mūla-mantra) and his guru as all being identical. This resplendent, divine personage then enters his heart as his essential self. While thus mentally busy, he thrice utters the formula declaring that his own self is identical with the absolute, divine self. It should be noted that the envisaged identification is not effected in one step. There are in fact a series of identifications. First, the worshipper's guru is identified with Śiva. Then Śiva and the Goddess are identified as the Two-in-One. Next, the main mantra of the deity is identified with the deity's mystic form. Finally, this form replaces the worshipper's mundane self. Only then is the investment of the worshipper with the divine self accomplished.

11. The worshipper then performs regulated breathing (*prāṇāyāma*) sixteen times (see page 169).

12. He starts performing the rite of *nyāsa*. First in the series of nyāsa comes that of the *mātṛkā* (alphabet) as the essential, mystic form of the Goddess who is the source of all the names and forms in the universe. This is followed by the nyāsa to sublimate the worshipper's fingers, palms and back of his hands. Thus consecrated, he uses his hands once again to dispel any lurking evil spirits by snapping his fingers, striking the left palm with two fingers of his right hand, and by glowering around. He also recites certain mantras ordering such spirits to depart forthwith. He then continues with the rite of *nyāsa*. The *nyāsas* performed by the worshipper of the *śrī-cakra* are: *mātṛkā-nyāsa* (to consecrate his hands), nyāsa to protect the worshipper, nyāsa of the four seats,[33] nyasa of the six main

[33] The self of the goddess, *Śrī-cakra*, all mantras and the *sādhya-siddha*.

limbs of the goddess Śrī,[34] *nyāsa* of the attendant deities, *nyāsa* of the letters of the main mantra, *ṣoḍhā-nyāsa*,[35] and *cakra-nyāsa*.[36] Finally, he transforms his body into the seat of the deity by means of *pīṭha-nyāsa* (nyāsa of Devī's seat). The latter stands on eight legs consisting of holy duties (dharma), knowledge (jñāna), divine excellence (aiśvarya) and renunciation (vairāgya) together with their opposites. These are mentally placed on the Tantric's upper body. The mystical lotus-seat of the deity, with its bulb buried in bliss and stalk consisting of pure consiousness, is envisaged in the worshipper's heart. On the pericarp of this lotus the three luminaries, viz. Sun, Moon and Fire with their parts (kalā or digit), are invoked and also the three constituents of the cosmic source (sattva, rajas and tamas). Next he performs the nyāsa of *ātman*, *antarātman*, *paramātman*, *jñānātman*,[37] and the *nyāsa* of *Māyātattva*, *Kalātattva* and *Vidyātattva*. After that he performs nyāsa of the seat and at the same time recites its mantra which consists of the mystic sound *hsauḥ*. He then salutes Sadāśiva, the supreme corpse (*mahāpreta*) who is symbolic of the goddess's lotus-seat.

13. Whilst meditating upon the goddess as seated, the worshipper shows a set of mudrās. For Tripurā these are ten, but the number varies for each deity (see TanS, p. 90; ŚT p. 141 comm.). *Mudrās*, or symbolic hand-postures, are in fact distinctive features of all deities. For instance, in the case of Śrī-cakra, each of its nine geometrical figures has a presiding deity whose distinctive mark is represented by the relevant mudrā.[38] The chief goddess Tripurā's special symbol is *trikhaṇḍā* (having three parts), which refers to the mystical visual representations of the goddess as the sound *īṃ* written as a letter composed of three parts (see p. 93). These parts are imagined as portraying her main characteristics as the cosmic woman. attention is focused on her head, breasts and sex-organ. The visual symbol is used for meditation on Tripurā. The mudrā consists of denoting the number three by joining palms and keeping three of the five pairs of fingers in an upright position whilst bending the other two pairs (*Nityotsava*, p. 72). The worshipper then performs a short meditation on the deity

[34] See plate 4.

[35] Gaṇeśa, the planets, stars, yoginī, constellations and holy places; these six go to make up a group that represents the main domain of the goddess.

[36] Nyāsa of the nine geometrical figures of the Śrī-cakra.

[37] These four ātmans are the various states of the self. Ātman is Brahman, antarātman is the enjoying jīva, the jīva in essence is paramātman, while jñānātman is Brahman as undifferentiated from jīva. Bhaskararāya's commentary Setubandha on YHT I. 12.

[38] These are sarvasaṅkṣobhinī, sarvavidrāvinī, sarvākarṣaṇī, sarvavaśaṃkarī, sarvānandanī, sarvamahāṅkuśā, khecarī, bīja, yoni, trikhaṇḍā.

in her full iconographic representation, as well as on her as represented by the mystic sound *iṃ* (Kāmakalā).

14. This short meditation is followed by another form of meditation. The worshipper first performs kuṇḍalinī-yoga and envisages the supreme Goddess as pure knowledge, experienced as a luminous flash illuminating his entire suṣumṇā nāḍī (see p. 168) from the lowest point where cosmic power usually lies dormant (*mūlādhāra*) to the crown of his head (*brahmarandhra*). He thus identifies his innermost being with the supreme divinity. In the middle of this *suṣumṇā* is the centre of the heart. There he envisages the śrī-cakra with the Goddess upon it. He then starts offering Her the customary services and gifts presented to a deity in ordinary pūjā. Only, he offers these items mentally, substituting ideas in place of concrete objects. This is called āntara-yāga (mental offering) and is highly esteemed amongst Tantrics. Flawless performance of this form of pūjā is dependent upon the worshippers's concentrative powers and experience in *kuṇḍalinī-yoga*. A Tantric at the highest stage of spiritual development may depend almost entirely on this mental pūjā and thereby drastically simplify the more concrete, or physical, form of pūjā. Since all the ingredients used in this pūjā are ideas, one has no need to bother about the availability of gifts etc. for offerings. The worshipper offers the Goddess a seat which is just his heart. He offers water to wash Her feet, and that water is the *amṛta* oozing from the thousand-petaled lotus above the crown of his head. He offers Her arghya (see p. 143), and that is his mind. He gives Her water to rinse Her mouth, and that is the same *amṛta*. The latter is again offered to bathe Her in and the principle of the sky-element to dress Her in. He offers Her the cosmic principle of smell (*gandhatanmātra*) as fragrant unguent, his experience as flowers, his vital air as incense, the cosmic fire as lamp, and *amṛta* as food. He offers Her the ringing of a bell represented by unstruck sound (*anāhatadhvani*); a fly-whisk represented by the cosmic element of air; and entertainment in the form of dance represented by the functioning of his senses and the agility of his mind. Finally, he offers Her fifteen flowers representing non-deception, non-pride, non-attachment, non-conceit, non-ignorance, non-boastfulness, non-hostility, non-perturbation, non-jealousy, non-greed, non-violence, non-indulgence (especially in all forms of sensual pleasure), benevolence, compassion, and experience. Then, instead of sacrificial beasts, he offers his two main vices, desire and anger.

After making these offerings, he envisages the fifty letters of the alphabet, each with the addition of its nasal sound, as forming a rosary strung on the *kuṇḍalinī* as thread. Using this rosary, he repeats his chief mantra both in forward and in reverse order. This performance is also offered to the

Goddess. Lastly, he performs the fire-sacrifice. The *kuṇḍa* (pit in which the sacrificial fire is lighted) is the cakra said to be situated in the vicinity of the navel. The worshipper envisages his antarātman, paramātman and jñānātman as permeating this *kuṇḍa* and awakening his *kuṇḍalinī*-power, which is pure knowledge. In this fire he sacrifices all the activities of his senses and his duties as well as his non-duties (acts to be refrained from). This emphasizes the worshipper's total sacrifice of all his personal interests in favour of the deity's supreme will. Last of all, he sacrifices his *ahaṃtā* (ego) in the same manner. Thus this mental pūjā contains all the three parts of ordinary pūjā: offering gifts and services; repeating the main mantra; and the fire-sacrifice. This form of pūjā is considered to be the ideal one because of its specially exalted spiritual tone. The deity is invited to take possession of the worshipper's inner consciousness by replacing his ego-consciousness. His physical body, his merits and demerits — everything that goes to make up his separateness as an individual — are vividly recalled and then offered to the deity.

It should be noted that often an abridged form of mental pūjā is performed by the ordinary worshipper (i.e. when the Tantric is not performing daily pūjā as part of his *puraścaraṇa* or primary worship of his deity and mantra, and has not vowed to complete a hundred thousand or multiple thereof, repetitions of the mantra, *japa*, terminating upon his attaining perfection in its performance, *mantra-siddhi* and directly experiencing identity with its deity). This abridged form of mental pūjā consists of offering the five basic gifts to the deity, viz. fragrant unguents, flowers, incense, lamp and food, for which the cosmic elements of earth, sky, air, fire and water in the form of *amṛta* are respectively substituted. Finally with the offering of *tāmbūla* (betel-leaf prepared with other ingredients), the worshipper offers all his abilities and energy. Each of these gifts is offered whilst pronouncing a mystic syllable, making an obeisance to the deity, announcing the name of the offering, and at the same time showing its *mudrā*. After that follows japa of the mantra and meditation on the deity as the letter *īṃ*, i.e. as Kāmakalā, the cosmic mother.

15. A. An important rite in Tantric pūjā is the setting up of the receptacle for the water of the special arghya. Usually, a white conchshell, placed on a stand with three legs, is used for this purpose. The worshipper draws in vermilion a special diagram consisting of single and double triangles enclosed within a circle and a square. He then places the three-legged stand upon it. The diagram is worshipped as the source of power, or locus, of the universe; while the stand is worshipped as the orb (*maṇḍala*) of Fire, composed of ten parts (*kalā*). Next he places the bowl or shell

on the stand, and worships it as the orb of the Sun, consisting of twelve parts. Then he pours a little alcohol from the container (*kalaśa*) and scented water from the jug of ordinary *arghya* into the receptable containing the special *arghya.*[39] This he worships as the orb of the Moon containing *amṛta* and consisting of sixteen parts. He pours some of this liquid into a bowl and sprinkles it over himself and all the offerings, without moving the container of viśeṣārghya.

B. In the Kaula type of pūjā[40] with its five special offerings of alcoholic drink, meat, fish, mudrā (snacks like parched grain)[41] and sexual intercourse, the worshipper ceremonially displays the container (*kalaśa*) of alcoholic drink. He then draws a maṇḍala of triangles and circles and encloses it within a square, using vermilion or red sandalwood-paste for drawing the lines. He salutes this diagram as representing the cosmic source, the Śakti. Then he places a low stand upon it, and on the stand the container with duly uttered mantras and other consecratory rites.

Next, he pours alcoholic drink into the container until it is full, while uttering the mantra of *mātṛkā* (alphabet) in reverse order. The liquid is then sanctified by invoking and worshipping the orbs of Fire, Sun and Moon and performing various other consecratory rites.[42] Then he toasts the goddess Ānandabhairavī and the god Ānandabhairava (the goddess of bliss and her partner) with the alcohol and salutes them. After that he places containers full of meat, fish and tasty snacks and consecrates them in the prescribed manner. These items act as purifying agents to counteract the effects of alcohol and always accompany the drinking which, without them, is considered sinful and pointless.

The next important rite in Kaula-pūjā is the arrangement of the drinking-cups (*pātrasādana*). These are small round cups with a rounded bottom and are always set on little separate stands. This particular rite gains special significance in the case of cakra-pūjā, which is pūjā performed jointly by a

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[39] Note that only followers of Śrī-kula use the special arghya. Other sampradāyas do not always use it. Kālī-worshippers of certain vāmācāra sampradāya (schools) add to the water a piece of cloth soaked in menstrual flow, and sometimes also a little semen.

[40] Kaula Tantrics always follow the most orthodox form of esoteric rites involving the practice of drinking alcohol, eating meat and fish, and having sexual intercourse with a chosen partner during pūjā. The partner is sublimated to the position of the goddess and is called Śakti. She is initiated in the sect and, at the time of pūjā, is consecrated and worshipped. Her face, breasts and sex organ are specially revered. The tantric exerts himself to please her with food, drink and gifts. e.g. KT V, 85-7; ibid. ix, 49-58; ibid. x, 5; SL, Lakṣmīdhara's comm., p. 182-3.

[41] Opinions vary about this item. It seems that any tasty snack is generally acceptable as the fourth item.

[42] See plates 5 and 6.

group of Tantrics on a special occasion. Theirs is a very intimate circle admitting no stranger. A highly experienced and much revered Tantric guru acts as leader and ensures that strict rules of etiquette are observed. The most important cup is that reserved for the Goddess (*śrī-pātra*), which is placed in the centre with elaborate ritual. Then come the cups for the guru, for the worshipper's self, for his śakti (female partner), for the yoginī, for the vīra, and the containers for offering bali, pādya (water for washing the deity's feet) and ācamanīya. These are placed in a row alongside the cup for the Goddess. Starting with Hers, each cup is three-quarters filled with the alcoholic beverage, into which the meat etc. are put. Finally, *madhuparka*[43] is placed in a cup by the side of these[44].

16. Now starts the actual ceremony of offerings, or *bāhya-pūjā*. The worshipper first worships his own self by placing a fragrant flower upon his head. Then he mentally invokes his spiritual teacher and the latter's predecessors in the holy order of his sampradāya. He worships them with flowers, and pours out an alcoholic libation containing some meat, fish and snack of some kind. With these he purifies the three ultimate realities (*Śivatattva*, *Vidyātattva*, and *Ātmatattva*). Then he sips the alcohol as prescribed in the ritual.

Thus symbolically identified with his guru and guru's line of predecessors, as well as with the Goddess, he performs the pūjā of Her sacred seat. He envisages and salutes the locus-power (in the form of the Goddess holding two lotuses). On her head is perched the bluish turtle surmounted by the foundation-stone, upon which the white serpent Ananta is seated. On this serpent, Viṣṇu (in the form of a boar) is envisaged holding the goddess Earth aloft. The Earth in turn holds the mystic jewelled island containing marvellous and mysterious gardens and pavillions made of gems. In the centre of these, he visualizes the couch of the Goddess as described before (page 143). But now, instead of Sadāśiva, he first envisages the eight-petaled lotus, the mystical seat of the Goddess. The bulb of the lotus — buried in the primordial Māyā and Vidyā[45] — is supreme bliss, its stalk is pure consciousness, and the lotus itself consists of all the cosmic realities. Its petals are the primary material source of the universe. Its pollens are the modifications of that primal source. The fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet form its pericarp. The three luminous orbs — Fire, Sun and Moon — are placed in this lotus.

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[43] A mixture of curd, milk, clarified butter and honey.

[44] These cups — starting with the main jug of wine — are arranged in a row from the left to the right of the sādhaka. See plates 7 and 8.

[45] See page 52.

The worshipper envisages each of these and offers obeisance to it. Finally he envisages each of the three constituents of the praṇava-mantra (a, u, m) and the three elements of the primal source (sattva, rajas and tamas), and worships them as identified with these three luminous orbs. Then at the four corners of the seat, ātman, antarātman, paramātman, and jñānātman are worshipped. Last of all, eight pīṭha-śaktis (guardian deities of the seat)[46] are worshipped. Only after that is Sadāśiva, the actual seat of the Goddess, worshipped. Thus, having envisaged the seat, the Goddess is invoked to arise from the worshipper's heart and take her place on the *Śrī-yantra*. He meditates on the Goddess and her spouse in his heart while holding in his hand a flower smeared with sandalwood paste. Then, by means of prāṇāyāma, he brings the Goddess up through his *suṣumṇā*-channel to his sahasrāra-centre. Next, he envisages Her coming out through his nose into the flower in his hand. He salutes Her and mentally utters the mantra : 'O mother, supreme goddess, who resides in the great lotus forest, and whose form is the bliss that is the cosmic source, you who are the embodiment of universal goodness, please come here, come here. O supreme goddess, easy to approach through devotion, I beg you to abide here with all your attendant deities for as long as I am performing this ritual worship'. After uttering this mantra he places the flower on the Śrī-yantra.

Then, the elaborate ritual of welcome starts. The worshipper utters his main mantra and, addressing the Goddess, invites Her to come with Her spouse, settle on the *yantra*, be present, confine Herself to the sacred area and meet the worshipper face to face.[47] Each of these requests is spelled out and accompanied with the suitable gesture (mudrā).

This is followed by the interesting rite of *sakalīkaraṇa*, or setting up parts of the deity. This suggests that in reality the Goddess is formless and hence has no parts (*kalā*) but, for the sake of being able to worship Her, she is conceived as an embodied entity. Her main six parts are saluted as separate deities (i.e. hṛt-śakti, śiras-śakti, śikhā-śakti, kavaca-śakti, netra-śakti, and astra-śakti)[48] After that come the ritual safety-measures,, such as enclosing Her within a magic circle and dispersing all evil elements by uttering the *astra-mantra* and snapping fingers. Then the Goddess is turned into *amṛta* and acclaimed supreme (*parama*) by means of mantras and gestures. Finally,

[46] These vary with each goddess. For Tripurā they are : Icchā, Jñāna, Kriyā, Kāminī, Kāmadā, Rati, Ratipriyā and Nandā.

[47] These are fixed steps in the ritual, common to all forms of worship. They are called *āvāhana, sthāpana, sannirodhana* and *sammukhīkaraṇa*. See Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary on ŚT, p. 255.

[48] Collectively these six parts and their respective śaktis are referred to as *ṣaḍaṅgayuvati*, or *ṣāḍāṅgī* (Nityotsava p. 44).

the *prāṇapratiṣṭhā* is carried out by showing the gesture of flame (*lelihā-mudrā*) while uttering the mantra: 'Let the five life-breaths of the Goddess Tripurā and Her spouse be here in the yantra; let Her soul be here with that of Her spouse; let all Her sense-organs be here; and let Her speech, mind, sight, faculty of hearing and of smelling, Her life-breath, etc. be here'. This mantra is interspersed with the entire alphabet and other mystic syllables. Then the attri' utes of the deity are shown in gestures.

Then the worshipper welcomes the deity and proceeds to offer Her gifts (*upācāra*). Although a minimum of five items suffices, in practice sixteen items are usually offered.[49] But one may offer ten, thirty-eight, sixty-four, or up to a thousand items. Rāghavabhaṭṭa explains that the term upācāra means something that enables one to approach the Goddess with devotion and that ensures Her closeness and favour (loc.cit. p. 156). In other words, the purpose of this pūjā is to serve (*upācarati*), and whatever the worshipper served the deity with is an *upācāra*. Each item is offered with a mantra consisting of a few mystic syllables, an address to the deity combined with a declaration of what the worshipper is offering and his salutation to Her. This is followed by a libation to the deity. After all the upācāras have thus been offered to the main deity, the worshipper shows Her a series of mudrās.

17. The six aṅgas of the Goddess, śikhā etc., are worshipped at the four corners of the yantra, and in front and at the back of the main deity who is in the centre. This forms a David's star with the six tiny triangles each holding one part or *aṅga*.

18. The most intimate attendants of the Goddess are then worshipped. In the case of Tripurā, these are the fifteen Nityās. The Goddess Herself is also worshipped in the centre as the sum-total of all the Nityās. Each Nityā is identified with one of the fifteen vowels, while the Goddess represents the last vowel (*aḥ*). These Nityās and the vowels with the nasal added are invoked on the central triangle of the yantra, five on each side of it.

19. The worshipper then worships his own *guruparamparā* on the first triangle inside the yantra. This rite covers the worship of three groups: the celestial group, the perfected group, and the human group. The list of names varies according to the Tantric's own tradition.

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[49] One list of sixteen upācāras is given by the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra VI. 78 and 79. These are: water to wash feet, arghya, water to wash face and mouth, madhuparka, requisites for the bath, dress, ornaments, scents and unguent, flowers, incense, lamp, food, a second offering of water for washing face and mouth, amṛta and betel, tarpaṇa and salute.

20. The *āvaraṇa* deities or attendants, who reside in the abode of the Goddess and surround Her in circular tiers, are now worshipped, starting from the inner circle and moving outwards. Reaching the square figures at the outer enclosure of the yantra, the ten guardians of the quarters are worshipped, followed by worship of the weapons and all other objects that in Her many manifestations the Goddess holds in Her hands. Finally Vaṭuka, Yoginī, Gaṇeśa, Kṣetrapāla, etc., chieftains of the Goddess's special hosts are worshipped.

21. This is followed by a short ritual offering of the incense, lamp and libation. Finally the worshipper offers cooked food to the deity, which should preferably include rice cooked with milk. This is done with great care after having duly consecrated the food. He requests the Goddess to accept this food prepared with due care skilfully blended to please all varieties of taste and attractively served. He then performs the *prāṇāgnihotram* by offering the Goddess a small portion of the food five times and uttering mantras, each consisting of a few mystic syllables such as *aiṃ*, *hrīṃ*, *śrīṃ*, etc., and the five lifebreaths (*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*) respectively mentioned in each mantra. The mantras end with the word *svāhā*, standing for an oblation to the fire of the Goddess's life-breaths. The last mantra mentions Brahman separately.[50] Then he prays that the Goddess who is his main mantra too (in the case of Tripurā the mantra is split into three groups of mystic syllables), and who pervades the three fundamental realities of Ātman, Vidyā and Śiva, may find the food acceptable. Next he meditates on the Goddess by envisaging Her as partaking of the food. He finishes this rite by offering Her drinks. After carefully removing the dish of food and placing it at the north-east corner, he offers Her water for washing and rinsing (*ācamanīya*), elaborately prepared betel,[51] money as dakṣiṇā, and then places a lamp of burning camphor in front of Her.

22. In *kaula-pūjā*, the worshipper now offers the Goddess a kula-lamp. It is made of special metal (sometimes it may be made of dough) and is filled with alcohol. This is lighted and he utters the following mantra while swinging it in a circle around the deity: "I offer you the kula-lamp representing internal fire as well as external fire which has unlimited lustre and I swing it around you three times'.

23. He concludes this part of the pūjā of offerings by taking a handful of flowers and offering it to the Goddess (*puṣpāñjali*) together with praise and a prayer.

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[50] See Bodewitz, JaimBr, pp. 243-245; 253-256; 310-314 and appendix.

[51] Tāmbūla, a preparation of betel leaf (*pān*), areca nut, lime and other herbs, etc.

24. He meditates for a while on Her Kāmakalā-form and on the seed-syllable of his *iṣṭa-mantra* as identical with the Goddess's essence.

25. The next step is to perform the fire-sacrifice, which is optional. It is performed when time and money permit. Therefore, it is performed regularly in most temples and in domestic worship on special occasions. At the north-east corner of the pūjā-pavilion, a square platform of sand is erected measuring about one-third of a square metre. On it the worshipper draws three horizontal and three vertical lines crossing each other. On these six lines he worships the six deities of the quarters (Brahmā, Yama, Soma, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Indra). Then performing nyāsa of the Fire-god's six aṅgas on his own body, he worships these in the fire-pit. Next, he worships the nine pīṭha-śaktis (goddesses of the Fire-god's seat). He then salutes the three guṇas (sattva, etc.) and the four ātmans (antarātman etc.). Above them he envisages the triangle which is the symbol of the universal source. In that triangle he envisages the Goddess Vāgīśvarī in sexual union with Vāgīśvara. Then he places the sacred fire in the pit, conceiving it to be their son. He praises the fire and requests it to rise and destroy, burn and roast everything. He recalls all the sacraments (*saṃskāra*) of this fire's lifetime up to his marriage. Then he performs the usual consecratory rites for the fire-pit, envisages the diagram representing fire and worships the Fire-god in its centre surrounded by attendant deities. After consecrating the clarified butter, he offers as oblation one spoonful for each of the Fire's seven flames conceived as tongues. Then he offers three oblations to the Fire-god. Of the seven flames, the central one is the most sacred, and the worshipper invokes Goddess Tripurā upon it. She is then offered a brief pūjā with five items, after which the worshipper offers Her oblations (thrice, ten times or more) followed by oblations to the attendant deities. Finally he performs the Mahāvyāhṛti-sacrifice by offering oblations with four *vyāhṛti*-mantras (*bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ*, *svaḥ*, and then all these three together). In *puraścaraṇa*, the number of oblations offered to the main deity is always one tenth of the times the main mantra is repeated in *japa*.

26. After the sacrifice, *bali* (offering) of cooked food is made to the other beings (*bhūtas*). Usually Vaṭuka, Yoginīs, Kṣetrapāla (guardian of the ground), Gaṇeśa and all bhūtas (*sarva-bhūta*) are deities to whom *bali* is offered. A *maṇḍala* containing a triangle, circle and square is drawn on the right side of the main deity (but not on the platform itself where the seat of the icon is set up). The worshipper here invokes the deities (usually Vaṭuka, Yoginīs and sarva-bhūtas) and worships them with a libation of water and arghya. Then he offers them food and drink whilst uttering the appropriate mantras. These beings are regarded as being instigators of

hindrances (*vighnakṛt*) and are propitiated together with the leader of the Goddess's host, Vaṭuka and the Yoginīs (the Goddess's supernatural followers). The gesture (mudrā) the worshipper makes is significant : it is the *nārāca-mudrā*, or gesture of the arrows, apparently used to intimidate the *bhūtas*.

Animal-sacrifice as bali: In the case of certain deities, such as Durgā or Kālī, and also in some other special forms of pūjā or in fulfilment of a vow, the Tantric sometimes sacrifices a living animal, fish, bird, or even human being as bali (see KālPur, ch. 67). Sacrificing a human being seems however to have been practised only by the most violent Tantric groups like the Kāpālika and by criminals (cf. Bhavabhūti's Mālatīmādhava, act V). The most common animal chosen for sacrifice is the goat, though buffalos are also sometimes sacrificed, especially to Durgā. Animal-sacrifice is performed after the usual bali-offering. The sacrificial animal is ritually bathed and consecrated, then worshipped with the five *upācāras* and various mantras, including a special Gāyatrī for a paśu (human being). The sword used to sever its head is also consecrated and worshipped, and is envisaged as being the seat of the divine triad of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Then after having dedicated the animal to the Goddess, it is beheaded. The head of the animal. a little of the blood and a bit of raw meat are offered in a metal bowl to the Goddess Durgā, or to Goddess Kauśikī. Then blood and raw meat are offered to Vaṭuka at the south-west corner, to the Yoginīs at the north-west corner, to Kṣetrapāla at the north-east corner, and to Gaṇeśa at the south-east corner (PKS, pp. 516-521).

An animal-sacrifice never figures in private daily pūjā, but only in naimittika-pūjā, except in big temples like the Kālī Temple in Calcutta where animal-sacrifice is performed in daily pūjā. Again, it is more common in the worship of Kālī than of Tripurā. Kālī is sometimes offered the blood of a freshly killed animal, or of one's own body (see KālPur, 67,40 and Kālī Tantra ch. 3).

27. The worshipper now circumambulates around the deity and prostrates himself in complete surrender.

28. *Japa* is one of the most important elements of Tantric ritual. It is in fact part of the meditation known as Tantra-yoga, or Mantra-yoga[52]. The Tantric concentrates on the Goddess in two ways, in ritual pūjās he concentrates chiefly on a visual representation of the Goddess, on Her iconographic or linear (*yantra*) form or some symbolic representation, whereas in

[52] See KT XV, 15. 'when tired of performing japa one should perform dhyāna, when tired of dhyāna one should practice japa'.

japa, Her mantra — as one of Her manifestations — is the most important element. The only concrete object needed to carry out this ritual repetition of the mantra is the rosary, which is very carefully chosen and consecrated. It is concealed from all eyes and carefully guarded from possible contamination. The beads can be made of various substances, e.g. seeds of certain fruits, gems, crystal, special types of wood or bone. Rosaries contain fifty or a hundred beads, with an extra bead called *meru* to mark the centre. After each round, on reaching the meru, one must not cross over it, but must turn back and retrace the order of the beads. This means that instead of turning the rosary circularwise it is moved forwards and backwards.

The consecration of the mantra is equally elaborate. First, the Tantric offers a handful of flowers to the Goddess whilst uttering the usual mantra of offering. Secondly, he performs a brief *prāṇāyāma*. Thirdly, he performs nyāsa of the different elements of the mantra on various parts of his body, concluding with the nyāsa on his hands and on the six limbs (*ṣaḍaṅga*). Fourthly, he envisages setting up a magic enclosure safe from unwanted interference, and then meditates on the Goddess. He meditates on the rising of Śakti within himself and shows the appropriate mudrā. He then utters a series of preliminary mantras to safeguard the efficacy of the main mantra. These are Kullukā, setu, mahāsetu, nirvāṇa, Kāmeśvarī, Kāmakalā, the collective mantra of all Yoginīs belonging to all exoteric and esoteric Tantric groups, utkīlana, sañjīvinī, prāṇa (life-breath), Dīpanī and the mantra of Cāmuṇḍā (the fierce manifestation of the Goddess) to remove all hindrances[53] (see p. 108f.).

Next, he briefly worships the rosary with five offerings, and follows this up with praise and a prayer for safety and spiritual guidance. Then he starts japa (repeating the mantra for the predetermined number of times). After that, he repeats the mystic syllables ascribed to the Goddess's close attendants followed by the mantras of the attendant goddesses, sometimes adding certain prayers. In concluding, he addresses the Goddess as one who conceals all mysteries, and offers Her his performance of japa, and prays for Her Grace and for his own perfection. He also utters a prayer for the rosary and, thanking it, stores it away in a hidden place. He then utters his guru's mantra with salutations, salutes his guru's guru and lastly the *parameṣṭhi* guru (the first guru in the line of his tradition).

29. He terminates the worship of the Goddess by singing eulogies of Her and of other deities in Her pantheon.

30. In *kaula-pūjā*, where the five items of alcohol etc. are compulsorily used, the worship of a young and handsome woman is included after the

[53] See PrT pp. 221-225.

worship of the main deity. By means of various consecratory rites and simple meditation, she is purged of her worldly impurities and limitations and is elevated to the status of representing the Goddess Herself. The worshipper effects her transformation by means of initiation and *nyāsa*. Then every part of her glorified person is worshipped by the Tantric. After completing her toilet, he dresses her up, presents her with gifts of ornaments and money, food, drink and betel. He concentrates on giving her pleasure which culminates in sexual union (*Nityotsava*, p. 60). Ritual drinking by the worshipper with this woman, who is called his Śakti, is a very important part of this act (see SL pp. 182-83). The Tantric offers her the first cup of alcohol together with pieces of cooked meat and fish and, after obtaining his guru's permission, lets the woman drink it while he utters a mantra and envisages the consecration of her three essential realities (*tattvas*). She may drink more if she so wishes. Then the Tantric offers her another cup of alcohol, and addressing her as the Goddess, requests her to accept the drink with the accompanying meat and fish, and to favour him by granting him fame and the destruction of his enemies. The woman then drinks part of what is offered and returns the rest to him with the words: 'my son, I give you back the rest of the drink in my cup. I shall destroy your enemies and grant you the fulfilment of all your wishes'. He drains the cup and does not drink any more and then, when she has finished her meal and is rested, he has sexual intercourse with her.

31. Kaulas sometimes perform a collective form of worship called *cakra-pūjā*[54]. Pupils of the same guru-paramparā gather together in a closed and small circle, each accompanied by his female partner. The convener conducts the *nitya-pūjā*, including a much simpler form of *suvāsinī-pūjā* or *dūtī-pūjā* (worship of a woman) (see KT X, 102). Each member of the group performs the rite of purifying the tattvas by drinking a little alcoholic drink and eating the cooked meat and fish. If the guru of the chief worshipper (convener) or someone of similar status is present, he is invited to be the guest of honour and offered the drinks first. The rest of the pūjā follows the same pattern as in suvāsinī-pūjā, except that the convener, who is the leader of the circle (*cakra*), offers the cups to his guests who share them with their partners. Strict rules of conduct are observed within the circle; ordinary Tantrics who have not yet reached a high level of spiritual competence and have not received their final form of consecration (*pūrṇābhiṣeka*, see p. 88f.) are not allowed to get drunk and behave improperly (see KT; chapters VI and VII). The spiritual level attained by a

[54] This is not a part of nityapūjā but a Kaula Tantric performs it often and so it is enumerated here for convenience.

Tantric is referred to as *ullāsa* (ecstacy). There are four stages in which after their first initiation Tantrics of the lowest grade learn the intricacies of pūjā and of yoga (the technique of meditation). The first stage is called the beginning (*ārambha*), the second is adolescence (*taruṇa*), the third is termed youth (*yauvana*) and the fourth is maturity (*prauḍha*). These terms obviously describe the gradual development towards the mature experience of ecstacy, the realization of identity with the deity (Śakti). The last three stages describe both the degree of intensity and the duration of the ecstatic feeling after that experience. After the stage of maturity comes the post-maturity-stage (*prauḍhānta*). The next stage is that in which mental limitations no longer have any hold (*unmanā*). Last of all comes the state that defies description (*anavasthā*). Only Siddhas and Vīras reach these last three states and rise above all mandatory rules and protocols (see KT. VII 2; *Nityotsava* p. 61).

32. The ritual worship now draws towards its conclusion. The Tantric begs pardon of the Goddess for all his acts whether good or bad, and offers them all to Her. He then sprinkles water from the viśeṣārghya over those assembled as well as over himself. At the same time he begs the Goddess's pardon for any fault or misbehaviour that he may have wittingly or unwittingly committed. He then envisages the disappearance of the Goddess from the yantra back to his heart, while all the attendant deities are envisaged as disappearing in Her. He mentally worships Her there in his heart, but very briefly. This is also accompanied by a suitable mudrā (*visarjana* or leave-taking), indicated by the mudrā of *saṃhāra*, or involution).

33. Concluding cautionary measures : the cups used for offering alcoholic drink to the deity and also by the Tantrics themselves must be carefully protected by measures to neutralize their potency. These cups are emptied completely, turned upside down on the ground to drip dry, and are then removed, cleaned and stored in a hidden place. The ground is protected by tracing a mystic syllable upon it. The flowers and other items offered, excepting food, are removed from the place of worship on a plate and placed on the ground on the north side of the place of worship, whereupon a *vyāpaka* (general or comprehensive diagram) has been traced. The vyāpaka consists of a triangle, circle and square with a central point. Here the deity of the left-overs (Ucchiṣṭa Bhairava) is invoked. He (or she) is conceived as possessing a terrible form — a manifestation of Śiva or of the Goddess — who removes all bad luck. This deity is then worshipped with flowers etc., and the contents of the aforesaid plate are offered to him with the request that he (or she) should protect the Tantric and ensure his success.

Then the worshipper recites the hymn of well-being (*śānti-stotra*), praying

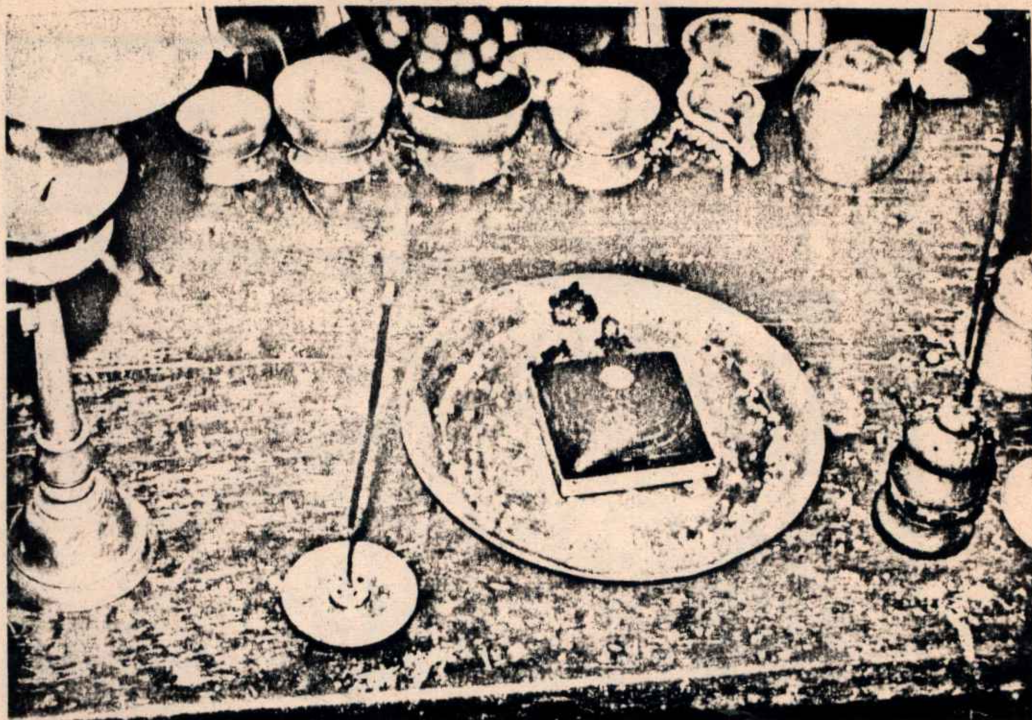


Plate 1. Śrī-cakra—the diagram of nine intersecting figures carved on black rock, the square surface of which is slightly elevated and rounded like the back of a turtle. It is mounted on a silver throne. Behind it the drinking cup dedicated to Śri (Śri-pātra) is filled with alcohol.

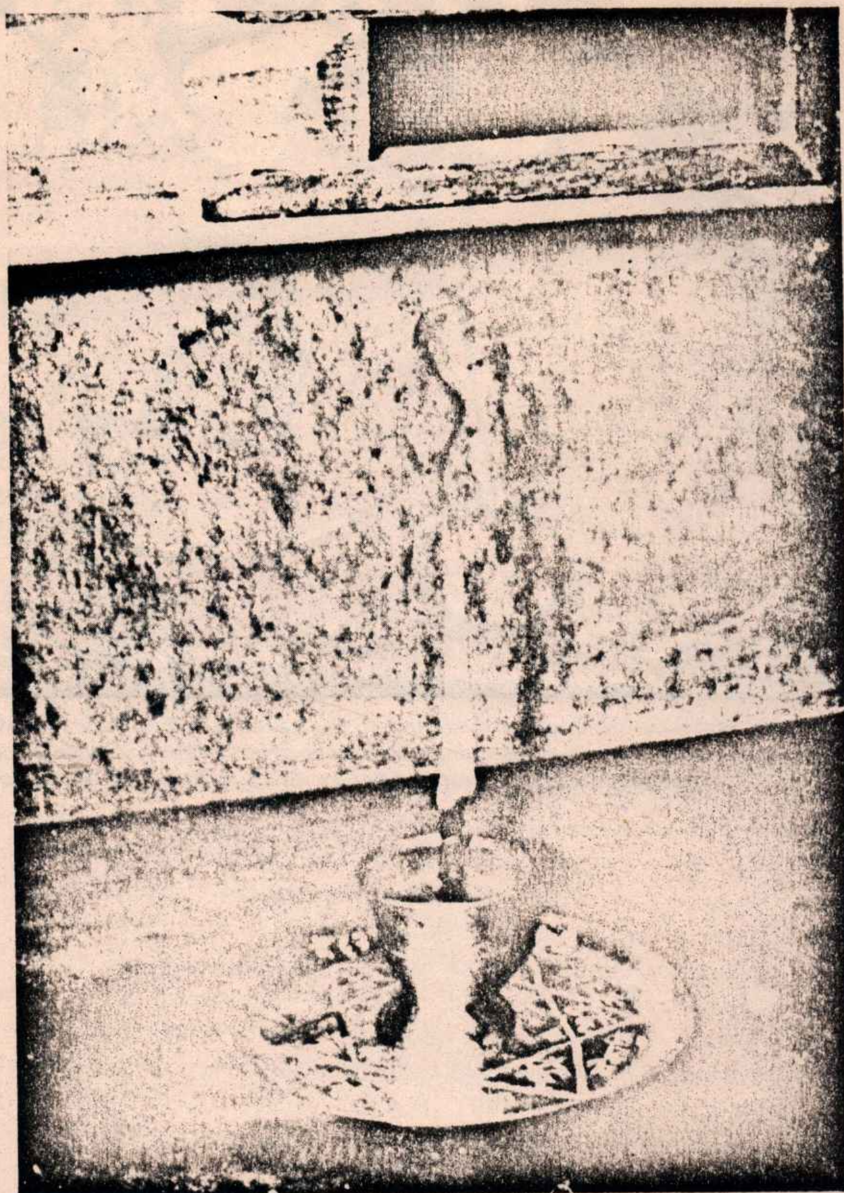


Plate 2. The special lamp is placed on a silver plate on which a diagram (yantra) is painted in vermilion. The wick is fixed in an upright position by securing its bottom end with a little dough.

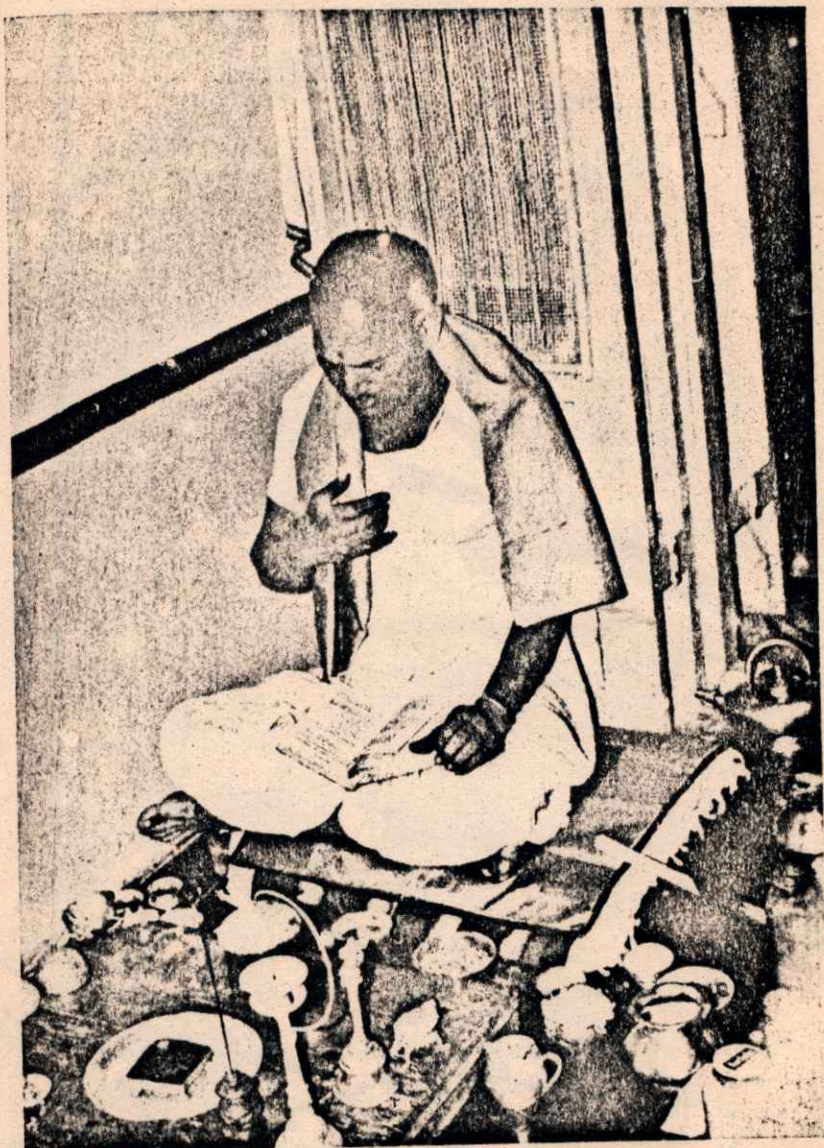


Plate 3. Bhūtaśuddhi—the worshipper is envisaging the deity's descent to his heart.

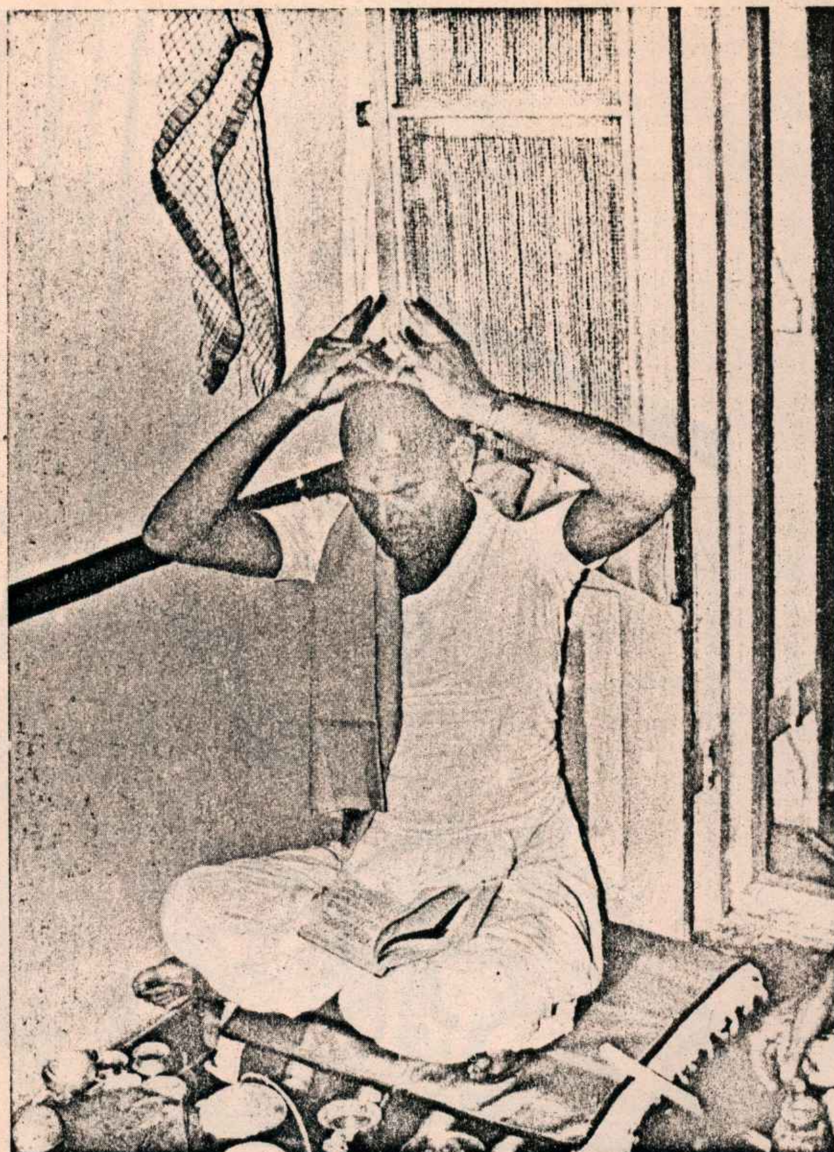


Plate 4. The worshipper is substituting the divine limbs for each part of his physical body (aṅganyāsa). Here he is accommodating the deity's head on his own.



Plate 5. The special jug for alcohol (sudhā kalaśa) is being filled with wine.



Plate 6. The wine jug is being consecrated with a mantra and meditation on the deity as the spirit infusing the alcohol (sudhādevi).

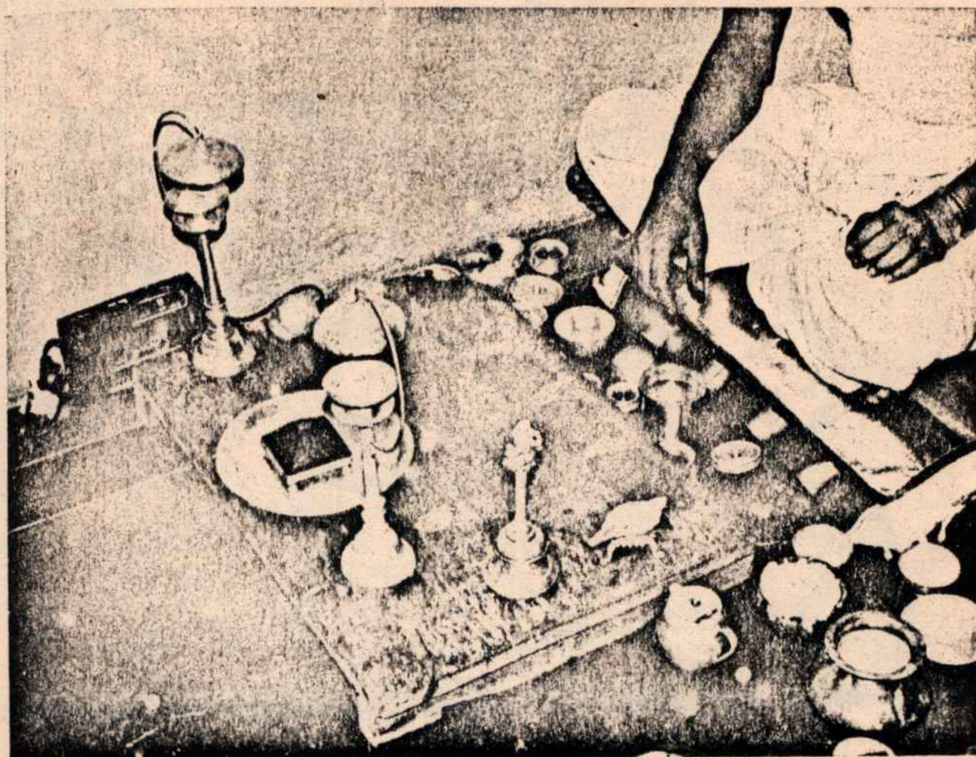


Plate 7. Before utensils are placed on the wooden pedestal, the space allotted to each is consecrated by painting a simple diagram (maṇḍala) upon it.

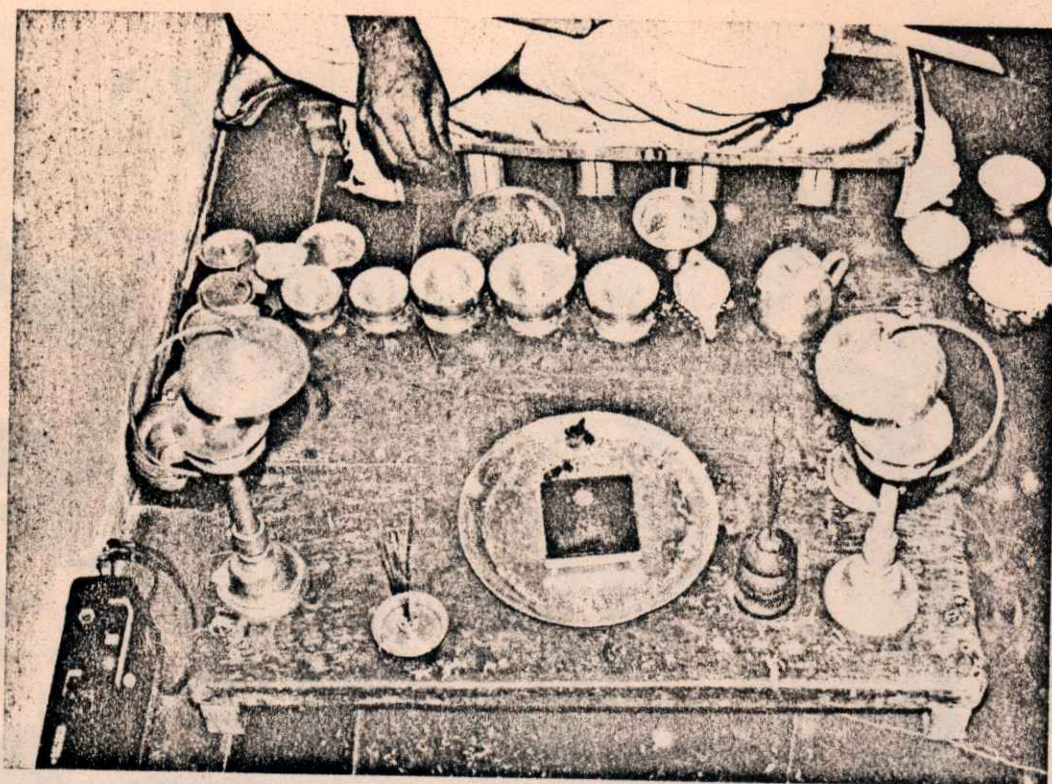


Plate 8. The jug of alcohol, the jug of special arghya and the cups for offering alcohol to the main deity and attendants are each placed in a row on its own ringstand on the top of a painted diagram. Śrī-pātra is in the centre.

for universal peace and happiness for all. Next he offers a libation to the Sun-god whilst uttering his mantra, and then prays that, by his grace, whatever fault he might have committed while performing the ritual should be condoned (this rite is known as *acchidrāgrahaṇam*). He then takes a flower, sniffs at it and smearing it with the sandalwood paste used for the yantra, utters a curse by saying that whoever he sees first or touches with his foot shall become his slave, even if that person be as powerful as Indra. After that he makes a spot on his forehead with that sandalwoodpaste and does the same to the other Tantrics attending the pūjā. Only now is the worshipper free to eat the food offered to the deity (*naivedya*) after having given some of it to brahmins and other Tantrics.[55]

34. In certain forms of Tantric kaula-pūjā after completing the pūjā of the Goddess and Her attendant deities, it is necessary to worship a young, unmarried girl of twelve or under (*kumārī*). The method followed is more or less the same as in suvāsinī-pūjā, except that no alcohol is offered and sexual intercourse is forbidden (*Nityotsava* p. 27).

This ends the description of the daily worship of the Goddess which is compulsory for every Tantric. Some simplification within the individual rites is permissible. For example, one may reduce the number of attendant deities worshipped after worshipping the main Goddess. It is also possible to use less expensive items as offerings. For instance, it is not always feasible for a poor Tantric to offer alcoholic drink, meat and fish every day, and so substitutes are allowed (e.g. milk instead of alcohol, radish for fish and ginger for meat).

Naimittika-Pūjā

Besides the daily worship, a Tantric performs a special pūjā on five particular nights in every month (counted from one new moon to the next). These are the eighth and fourteenth night of the dark fortnight, the new- and full-moon nights, and the last night of the month (KT X,79).[56] These special pūjās are called naimittika-pūjās and are always performed during the night. The rites of *nyāsa*, internal worship and *japa* are considerably elaborated and the items offered are increased in number and quantity. Otherwise the pattern remains the same. There are also certain occasions in each year

[55] In the case of cakra-pūjā, the sexual acts take place only after all rites have been completed and the food has been eaten.

[56] It is very important for a Tantric to have good knowledge of astrology. In fact many Tantrics earn a living from fees obtained for preparing horoscopes and calculating auspicious occasions for performing sacraments for ordinary people.

that are set aside for special worship. *Damanaka* is an important form of worship performed on the fourteenth night of the bright fortnight of the month of Caitra (spring)[57]. That evening the Tantric goes to a garden and cuts a length of the damanaka creeper (artemisia indica). This is then cleaned, placed in a basket, consecrated and worshipped with five upācāras. Then, covering it with a piece of fine cloth and placing it in the corner of a temple, he keeps vigil over it throughout that night. This rite is known as *adhivāsa*. Next day, after his daily worship, he performs a special pūjā to the deity, with the damanaka as offering. He also worships the attendant deities in the same manner. He then performs the fire-sacrifice three times in a more elaborate form than usual.

Another special pūjā that is widely regarded as important is *pavitrāropaṇa*. This special worship of the Goddess, observed on the full-moon night in the month of Śrāvaṇa (the rainy season), is an expiatory rite involving the ceremonial offering of a necklace made of thread[58] to the main deity and all Her attendants. This rite is performed to redeem all the accumulated shortcomings of the worshipper on account of mistakes and any other faults on his part during the observance of all the pūjās performed during the past year. The *pavitra* (thread) offered has a certain number of knots in it, each of which is allotted to a particular deity. There are various methods for determining the exact length of the thread, which is made of several strands twined together. It should be noted, however, that this rite is observed by all Hindu sects and is not confined to Tantrics alone.

There are also a few other important dates[59] for observing special pūjās. Besides these, the birthday of the Tantric's guru also counts as one of these special occasions.

Expiatory rites and rites performed on the death of a Tantric (*śrāddha*) also fall within the classification of naimittika-pūjā. The former consist mainly of pūjā and japa of a mantra for a fixed number of times. In the Tantric form of death-rites, the corpse should be specially consecrated with nyāsa etc. by a Tantric of the same school (*sampradāya*), who then performs the pūjā of the deity and japa of Her mantra for the required number of times before the body is cremated. In case of delay in finding a suitable Tantric, the cremation takes place nevertheless, but within

[57] This rite is performed in order to crush enemies in general and to avert misfortune caused by adverse constellations (*graha*).

[58] Different varieties of thread can be used; for instance, gold or silver thread, silk, grass-fibre, cotton, etc. can all serve the purpose.

[59] In the sense of lunar junctures.

three days the Tantric rite is performed on a tiny replica of the corpse made of special grass.[60]

Kāmya-pūjā

The third category of pūjā is known as kāmya-pūjā. These rites are performed in order to achieve a particular aim, or to fulfil a special desire. They are classified in six groups according to the nature of their purpose. However, various texts classify these groups differently. The ŚST names three alternative groups; the TT presents another list; the YogT and the ŚT (23,122 f) enumerate śānti, vaśya (subjugation), stambhana (making inert), vidveṣaṇa (generating enmity), uccāṭana (displacement) and māraṇa (causing death).

Śānti-rites are observed to cure disease, to remove bad luck due to an adverse astrological situation, and to thwart bad influences caused by the ritual practices of others. This type of pūjā is performed for either the Tantric's own safety, or on behalf of somebody else who seeks his occult help. The other types are grouped collectively as *abhicāra* (or *krūra* karma) which may be translated as black magic.

Generally speaking kāmya-pūjā tends to be regarded as infamous, since its purpose is always worldly and has nothing to do with spiritual perfection. Yet the magical aspect of this form of pūjā and faith in its efficacy have a wide appeal for many who are not even Tantrics. As a matter of fact Tantrics, who are usually married men with families, often derive their income from performing the first type of *kāmya-pūjā* on behalf of other people.

The abhicāra-rites, on the other hand, are usually condemned. In fact Tantrics often suffer from public mistrust and fear stemming from the belief that they can cause harm. Tantra texts always advocate extreme caution in practising abhicāra. First of all, only Tantrics who have reached a very high spiritual level are allowed to practise these rites. This is to ensure that the public can rely on the discretion and disinterestedness of such men. It is also prohibited to practise abhicāra for personal gain or revenge, and it should never be practised against those who are innocent and harmless. The only permissible occasions for resorting to abhicāra are in cases of emergency, sudden attack, invasion, or to prevent a crime, etc. Even so, the TT (13,99-100) stipulates that a Tantric who performs māraṇa must follow this up with an expiatory rite that involves the penalty

[60] Information received from Prof. V. N. Khiste.

of giving away money or property and must, at the same time, undergo acts of penance and perform a vast number of japas. Nevertheless, these cautions do not prevent Tantrics from performing these rites to demonstrate their supernatural power (e.g. NT 20,53-55). Ordinary people both respect and shun them through fear lest, in anger, they cause harm.

The mode of performing these ritual pūjās does not significantly vary from that of daily worship. The main features are a) the yantra, b) the mantra, c) the deity. Each type of such a pūjā has its special yantra — a geometrical figure of a particular type drawn with special ingredients on a special surface. Inside this complex diagram, the special mantra earmarked for the act is written in a complicated pattern interspersed with various mystic syllables, amongst which the name of the beneficiary or of the victim is also written. Sometimes an effigy may be used (see ŚT. 19, 72-73 and 22, 123ff.), or a part of the victim's body, e.g. a hair or nail. The mantra is always a very special and long one, expressing the purpose most effectively. The japa of this mantra is the most important factor of the ritual. In *abhicāra* rituals the deities are different from those in ordinary pūjās and often have dangerous characteristics (see ŚT 13, 126. Rati, Vāṇī, Ramā, Jyeṣṭhā, Durgā and Kālī are said to be the deities for śānti, vaśya, stambhana, vidveṣaṇa, uccāṭana and māraṇa respectively). At the beginning of each ritual the special deity is worshipped in the usual manner described under daily worship. Kārtavīrya, Nṛsiṃha etc. are also important deities in this context. But any manifestation of the main deity can be substituted for an abhicāra-deity and, generally speaking, the fire-sacrifice with special offerings figures rather prominently in kāmya-pūjā.

The main feature is, of course, japa. Every ritual for a special purpose has its own stipulated number of repetitions of the mantra, which is usually not less than a hundred thousand times, or even more. The wearing of a talisman consisting of a mantra specially inscribed on a particular surface is not uncommon. For curing a disease or other ailment, or for purposes of subjugation, eating or drinking certain items that were offered in the ritual is often recommended.

In some forms of kāmya-pūjā it is customary to burn one or more lamps[61] continuously until the required number of japas has been completed. Should the lamp or lamps go out before then, the Tantric regards it as an indication of failure. Many other such obvious magical elements feature in kāmya-pūjā. If however the required ingredients are collected faithfully

[61] See plate 2.

and correctly, the steps of the ritual followed without error, the mantras are correctly uttered and repeated the required number of times, and no sacrilege or impurity has crept into the performance — then the desired result should follow automatically.

But the result depends crucially on the capacity of the worshipper. Not just anybody can perform these rites. In the first place, only he who has undergone the final initiation is qualified to do so. Secondly, the performer should moreover have attained perfection (*siddhi*) in the worship of his own main mantra (*mūla-mantra*). That means that he must first succesfully bring his puraścaraṇa ritual to an end, which makes it necessary to say a few words here about that ritual. The word *puraścaraṇa* means preliminary acts. After his final initiation, a Tantric is entitled to start practising the preliminary rites that will lead to his perfection in the mantra given to him as his main mantra.

There are five parts to puraścaraṇa : daily worship of the mantra and of the deity; daily performance of homa (fire-sacrifice); japa; offering the libation; and feeding brahmins (see KT 15, 7-8). The Tantric takes a vow to perform a certain number of japas of the mantra until he experiences perfect identity with his mantra and its deity. He regularly performs his spiritual duties of pūjā etc. and continues practising japa and yoga — the two main elements of Tantric yoga. He observes purity and austerity in his food and other basic daily needs. A strictly regulated and ethical mode of life is followed. Usually all this takes considerable time, depending on his personal capacity and spiritual acumen. Once this primary training comes to an end and the Tantric has attained perfection in his mūla-mantra, he has completely mastered the technique of yoga.

In *kāmya-pūjā* the rites of homa, japa, etc. form part of the prescribed puraścaraṇa ritual for worship of the mantra and its deity. When this has been brought to a succesful end, the worshipper becomes identified with the power of the divine and is empowered to use the mantra for the relevant act. He can then persuade that divine power to fulfil whatever he desires.

Use of a corpse for pūjā (śava-sādhanā).

One of the extremely daring ways of performing *kāmya-pūjā* is to use a corpse as seat for the Tantric and, at the same time, as representing the deity. This rite is performed in a very lonely place, preferably near a cremation-ground. The corpse is chosen with great care and discretion. In certain cases, a child's corpse is preferable to any other. Only a *vīra*-type of Tantric is entitled to perform this difficult rite. He needs an

assistant to help him in his sādhanā. This assistant is called *uttarasādhaka* and should be as spiritually advanced as the performer himself. This is a secret rite and the secrecy should be strictly observed. The corpse, which should be fresh, is bathed and consecrated in the usual manner with mantras, mudrās and nyāsa. The worshipper and his helper have also bathed in the same way. An important feature of this rite is that the participants must have had a good meal before starting pūjā. The usual steps of pūjā are observed with special emphasis on the protective rites. Śava-sādhanā is no rite for the timid to undertake, as the performers tend to have hallucinations of a most terrifying nature. By means of nyāsa etc. the torso of the corpse is transmuted into the cosmic seat of the Goddess. As identified with Her, the worshipper sits upon it. Its face is conceived to be the deity's face and is worshipped as such. The Tantric pours alcoholic drinks into the corpse's mouth and feeds it with cooked meat. The uttarasādhaka sits a short distance away at the imaginary gate of the sacred enclosure. The hair of the corpse is tied into a topknot and sixteen upacāras are offered to the Goddess, who is envisaged as entering the corpse to enliven it. The Tantric then duly starts his japa (repetition of his mantra for the required number of times). The corpse is expected to start moving and then gradually to come to life, the divine life and ego having descended into it. The Tantric binds the deity, who speaks through the voice of the corpse, with a promise to grant him Her favour, and he then prays for fulfilment of his special desire. At the end of the pūjā, he disposes of all the remaining ingredients of the pūjā and of the corpse itself, either in the water of a swiftly flowing river, or buries them in the ground. The Tantric must keep this act a secret for at least three to nine days, even though he must feed some brahmins after performing this pūjā (see KAN, Uttara 14). For achieving a particular end specified by the nature of the Kāmyakarma utilized, the worshipper prepares a yantra containing special signs and the mantra of the specific kāmyakarma is written down on that yantra in a highly technical manner (NT 18, 10-12).

CHAPTER SIX

TANTRIC SĀDHANĀ : YOGA

1. The second part of Tantric practice (*sādhanā*) is yoga. Though the actual practice of Tantric yoga is held to be impossible without the personal guidance of a *guru*, the basic theory and schemata underlying this practice occupy a large part in the texts.

2. The classic characterization of yoga is that at the beginning of Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra (I, 2), where yoga is defined as the suspension of the cognitive functions of the mind (*yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*).[1] All Tantric texts accept this technical definition, but in characterizing yoga lay more stress on its goal than on its character as a means to a goal. The goal, as should be clear from the preceding pages, is the union of the individual self (*jīvātman*) with the supreme Self (*paramātman*) (ŚT 25, 1; KT 9, 30). The ŚT enumerates other formulations of this goal, but all the Tantric ones are theistic.[2]

Thus for Tantrism yoga is a discipline leading to the goal of merging oneself with the divine. Several disciplines are accepted as potentially efficacious; these disciplines are by no means mutually exclusive, and most of them are also found outside Tantra. The two disciplines which are characteristically Tantric, and which are indeed always present in Tantra yoga, are meditation on mystical syllables (Mantra yoga) and a scheme of meditation, known as Laya yoga or Kuṇḍalinī yoga, which concerns an elaborate mystical physiology. As Mantra has been considered in chapter IV, it is the latter which will occupy most space in this chapter. Laya means 'dissolution', and refers to the dissolution of the everyday world (macrocosm) within the Tantric's own body seen as a microcosm and ultimately the dissolution of his empirical self into the deity. Kuṇḍalinī yoga, which is a

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[1] For more information about the meaning of yoga in PYS, see E. Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, I. Band, Salzburg 1953, pp. 408-445; Pātañjala Yoga is often called aṣṭāṅga Yoga, 'the discipline of eight steps' or 'eight constituent parts' — see below.

[2] These are the experience of the identity of Śiva and the individual self (pratyabhijñā theory of Kashmir Śaivism); identification of Śiva and Śakti (Uttarāmnāya/āgama school); true knowledge of the Primal Puruṣa (purāṇa puruṣa) (Vaiṣṇava dualists). The views of Sāṃkhya and Nyāya philosophy are also mentioned. ŚT 25, 2-3 and Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary thereon.

name for the same process (though some Tantrics are unaware of this identity between the two), takes its name from Kuṇḍalinī, the coiled female serpent which lies at the base of the spine and symbolizes the cosmic energy (see pp. 170-5); due to the individual's ignorance the cosmic energy remains powerless and limited, as the individual energy (*jīvaśakti*). This serpent has to be aroused to proceed up the centre of the body till it reaches a point just above the top of the head which symbolizes the Supreme Self (see p. 57 ff.).

The mystical physiology envisages a series of lotus centres (*cakra*) and of nodes (*granthi*) arranged up the (mystical) spine, and a system of veins (*nāḍī*) through which passes the vital air (*prāṇa* or *vāyu*). Crucial points in the body are occupied by deities and other symbols which historically arise from the macrocosm-microcosm equivalence. The whole system is visualized in great detail. Thus, though Tantric meditation involves suspending the mind's cognitive functions, this must not be understood to imply that the mind is emptied: on the contrary, the introversion (cessation of response to the external world) is to give free rein to the intuition (*sākṣijñāna*). The mind, once controlled, is concentrated on the yogin's picture of himself and step by step on the process which this visualized self is to undergo in order to achieve liberation (see chart, also Frauwallner, 138, 139 and 141).

3. *Classifications of yogic disciplines*

Yogic texts enumerate four types of yoga in this order: Mantra Yoga, Haṭha Yoga, Laya Yoga, Rāja Yoga (YTU 19; YŚU 1, 129; 5, 17 etc.).[3] The first and third of these we have just characterized. Haṭha Yoga may be summarily characterized as a discipline in which the overcoming of normal physiological limitations plays a great role. We shall later come back to some detailed description of this discipline. Rāja (royal) Yoga is sometimes interpreted as Pātañjala Yoga, but sometimes just as the final step in any of the yoga disciplines.[4] The interrelation between Laya (this term is more popular

[3] The definition in the Yogatattvopaniṣad (YTU 24) suggests that this text at any rate includes Pātañjala (i.e. Aṣṭāṅga) Yoga in Haṭha Yoga.

[4] About the fourth form of yoga, viz. Rāja Yoga, there seems to exist some ambiguity and opinions differ. The Yogaśikhopaniṣad tends to suggest that it means yoga that uses sex-symbolism (YŚU 1, 136-138); but from statements in the PrT it would seem that Rāja Yoga is equivalent to the final stage of Laya Yoga. This is the stage in which the whole of the yogin's differentiated existence is totally submerged in the undifferentiated (HYP 4, 77). HYP (4, 103) contends that Rāja Yoga is the goal of Haṭha Yoga. Therefore, it might be permissable to conclude that Rāja Yoga is that which leads to immediate samādhi, or rather what Pātañjala Yoga terms as undifferentiated merger (*asamprajñāta samādhi*). Vyāsa, Bhāṣya on PYS 1 1, 2, 11, 18 and 20.

amongst Haṭha yogins). Mantra and Haṭha yogas (we here name them in the order in which we shall deal with them) is also complex. As disciplines they are more or less complementary; but individual yogins and the pupillary tradition (*sampradāya*) see themselves as adhering principally to one of them and accepting elements from the other two. Laya Yoga and Mantra Yoga are approved in Tantric texts as suitable for the adept (*sādhaka*), but one whose primary affiliation is to the Haṭha Yoga tradition is not considered a true Tantric.[5] Tantric texts clearly state that Tantric yoga consists of Mantra and Aṣṭāṅga, combined with Kuṇḍalinī yoga (ŚT ch. 25). The Kulārṇava Tantra declares that Tantric yoga consists of japa and meditation on Mantra (KT 15, 5), the Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava too affirms this (NṢT 2, 1 ff.), though some other step of Aṣṭāṅga yoga is mentioned.[6] The Yoginī Hṛdaya Tantra, on the other hand, is very definite about the importance of Kuṇḍalinī yoga in Tantric sādhanā and includes it as part of the pūjā (YHT 3, 139-142). This means of course that Kuṇḍalinī yoga is practised together with Mantra yoga. Though we can to some extent separate them in exposition, it is hardly possible to separate Mantra and Kuṇḍalinī yoga in the practice of Tantric yoga. And even at an earlier stage it was not uncommon for Tantrics to use Haṭha Yoga techniques alongside their own.[7]

4. *The steps of yoga*

The Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra says that yoga has eight steps, and ŚT accepts that (ŚT 25, 4). The eight steps are : *yama* (abstention), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (postures), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhāraṇā* (fixed-introverted-attention), *dhyāna* (contemplation) and *samādhi* (concentration, fixation). However, in strict Tantra circles yoga had only six steps. They are thus listed in the Tantrālokaviveka[8] : *prāṇāyāma*, *dhyāna*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *tarka* (transcendental discrimination) and *samādhi*. This list omits the first three of Patañjali's eight steps, which are in fact preliminaries to the actual practice of meditation, and adds

[5] A Haṭha yogin is on the other hand more concerned about his physical perfection and follows strenuous techniques to achieve that. These techniques are often despised by the Tantra. cf. KT, 9.

[6] NṢT 2, 12 mentions mudrā as aid to Mantra-japa. The real meaning of the term mudrā as used in the verse is not quite clear.

[7] The Tantra yoga utilizes many of the Haṭha Yoga postures like Khecarī mudrā, Yonibandha mudrā etc. for awakening the individual energy. Cf. V. V. Dviveda, *Introduction* to NṢT, pp. 114-115.

[8] On TA 4, 15-16. See also V. V. Dwiveda, op. cit. p. 118.

tarka.[9] A Buddhist Tantra, the GuhyaSamāja Tantra, incorporates the same six steps of yoga into its own system (GST 18, 140), and a much earlier text, the Maitrāyaṇīya Āraṇyaka (6, 18 also cf. Maitri Upaniṣad 6, 8) has the same six again. On the other hand the Pr.T. quotes the Niruttara Tantra as listing six steps, but not the same six: *āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi*. This list restores *āsana* and omits *tarka*. From all this we conclude that the oldest classification gave yoga six components. *Tarka*, which meant philosophical speculations about the nature of phenomena (later systematized in Sāṃkhya philosophy), was an integral part of yogic practice, and this tradition was preserved in orthodox Tantric circles.[10] It complemented the psycho-physical techniques which became systematized in Pātañjala yoga and this became accepted as part of the standard form of yoga; these were the techniques which culminated in Haṭha Yoga.[11]

Haṭha-yoga prescribes a sixfold self-purificatory programme to be practised before practising *āsana, mudrā, pratyāhāra, prāṇāyāma, dhyāna* and *samādhi*. This sixfold practice (*ṣaṭkarma*) entails purely physical methods of cleansing. Through persistent practice the yogin learns to clean his nasal passages (sinus cavities), windpipe, stomach, bladder, intestines, etc. by inhaling or sucking up water through his nose, anus or penis, or by pushing a long thin strip of muslin through his nasal cavity, swallowing it and then carefully pulling it out. These are practices to keep the body healthy. Āsanas and mudrās are the two important factors that figure in this form of yoga. Both entail certain postures in which the physical organs are locked in a fixed position. *Āsanas* are in fact sitting-postures, though many *āsanas* make sitting quite impossible. Mudrās are specific positions of the body made by using the hands, fingers, toes, heels, and even the tongue to close several or all inlets and cavities of one's body, and both *āsana* and *mudrā* are important aids for successfully regulating the vital breath (*prāṇāyāma*).

5. *Preliminaries to meditation*

However, Pātañjala Yoga, and the Tantric tradition which accepts its eight steps, do not insist on such elaborate physical preliminaries. They

[9] On tarka see Amṛtanādopaniṣad, 6; TA 4, 86-107; also Jayaratha's commentary on these verses. Note that the commentary on verse 96 mentions that the system of Kashmir Śaivism recognizes six components of yoga. Abhinavagupta seems to have accepted the components of Pātañjala Yoga as well.

[10] The Mṛgendrāgama enumerates *japa* along with the six components. The Viṣṇu Saṃhitā enumerates the traditional six. The Layayoga counts *tarka* as an integral part of Laya Yoga.

[11] See YTU 24-29

lay more stress on the moral than on the physical preparations for meditation. They[12] explain the first three steps as follows.

Yama. This consists of ten virtues: not injuring anything or any being; truthfulness; not stealing another's property; practising continence and chastity; compassion; straightforwardness; mercy; resolution; eating abstemiously; and purity.

Niyama. The practice of asceticism and fulfilling vows; contentment; faith in religion; offering gifts; worshipping God; listening to religious discourses; modesty; speculation on philosophical ideas; performance of japa; and performance of the fire-sacrifice — these are the ten physical and mental acts recommended under *niyama.*

The distinction between *Yama* and *Niyama* is somewhat arbitrary. For example, the Yogatattva Upaniṣad (28, 9) declares that the main feature of Yama is abstentious eating and that of Niyama not harming any creature.

Āsana entails sitting-postures. There are a vast number of these approved of and practised in yogic circles. Some are very difficult and take long practice; but for *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* simple sitting-postures are recommended. YTU seems to suggest that *āsana* also means the place where yoga is practised as well as the posture itself. It describes the āsana suitable for practising *prāṇāyāma* as a thoroughly clean and flawless temple, with a pleasant atmosphere and a minute entrance. The yogin should spread a seat made of matting, deerskin, or silk, in a position that is neither too high nor too low, and there incense should be burned to make the place cheerful. The posture recommended is the lotus-posture. ŚT mentions five suitable postures, viz. lotus, *svastika*, *vajra*, *bhadra* and *vīra.*[13]

6. *The acquisition of control*

The fourth, fifth and sixth steps of eightfold yoga, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā*, are three processes to regulate, control and arrest the mind by fixing it upon some spot in the body. Thus the yogin acquires control over his vital processes. *Prāṇāyāma* literally means control of the vital airs. To explain how Tantra conceives of this control, however, we must begin our account of its mystical physiology. The breath of life, which is generally

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[12] Our explanations of the eight steps follow ŚT 25, 5-26; the PYS account is slightly different.

[13] For explanations of various āsanas, mudrās and bandhas — all of which concern special physical attitudes and even efforts, consult B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light of Yoga*, London 1966; also the plates and explanations of the mudrās and bandhas given in the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā, edited by Swami Digambarji and Pt. Raghunath Shastri Kakaje, Lonavla, Dt. Poona 1970.

called *prāṇa*, is usually held to consist of five[14] breaths or winds (*vāyu*) moving in different directions: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*. The vital breaths constitute everything airy which is felt in one's body; they pass through all its physical passages and regulate all its functions. They are manifest forms of vitality or life itself. *Prāṇa* in the generic sense is the cause of the particular breaths, and they in turn are the cause of the mind. Therefore control over the one leads to control over the other two. All are normally unruly, but by controlling the breaths the yogin calms down and controls the whole complex.

The theory of the breaths is not peculiar to Tantra; what follows is. The mystical body contains a vast number of veins (*nāḍī*), which are considered to be the connecting links between the senses and the mind. Moreover, they are activated by the passage of the breaths. If the yogin stops the passage of the breaths through the *nāḍis*, he thereby stops the activities of the senses and severs the connection between the mind and external sensory objects, which are what distracts him from concentrating on the essence of his individual self. In this theory prāṇāyāma thus merges with pratyāhāra, withdrawal of the senses, which is the next step of the eight (see below).

Though the TT (27, 42) records fifty thousand nāḍīs, only fourteen are relevant for Tantric yoga. Their names are: suṣumṇā, iḍā, piṅgalā, sarasvatī, vāraṇā, puṣā, hastijihvā, yaśovatī or yaśasvinī, viśvodarā, kuhū, saṃkhinī, payasvinī, alambuṣā, and gāndhārī.[15] All of them stem from the lowest of the six centres (cakra) which are arranged up the spine. This cakra is in fact called 'the locus of the roots' (mūlādhāra). In the middle of the mūlādhāra cakra is a triangle. From the centre of this triangle rises the central, axial nāḍī, the suṣumṇā; it rises to the *brahmarandhra*, a cavity at the fontanel, which is considered to be the door to the realization of the knowledge of Brahman. The suṣumṇā is the only nāḍī which is not connected to a sense organ. On either side of suṣumṇā are two nāḍīs called iḍā and piṅgalā which terminate in the left and right nostrils respectively.

As for the other nāḍīs: alambuṣā goes down to the anus, kuhū connects with the tip of the penis, viśvodarā reaches the abdomen, vāraṇā is spread all over the body, hastijihvā and yaśovatī respectively connect the two big toes, gāndhārī and puṣā connect one eye each, saṃkhinī and payasvinī connect one ear each and sarasvatī stretches up to the tongue.

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[14] Sometimes this number is raised to ten. Cf. ŚT 1, 44-45.

[15] Bhāvanopaniṣad 15 and Bhāskararāya's commentary on the same Upaniṣad, 1; see also ŚT 1, 41-43, the number of nāḍīs is here ten.

We are now in a position to describe *prāṇāyāma*. It primarily concerns the first two of the five breaths: prāṇa and apāna. Prāṇa is the stream of air that moves upwards in the body, and apāna is the stream that moves downwards in the body. These two streams represent the respiration of living beings. When these two breaths flow through iḍā, the mind becomes concentrated and introvert, and when they flow through piṅgalā the opposite takes place. Normally, breathing is done through one of these two nāḍīs, and the process does not alternate regularly between the two. In *prāṇāyāma* the yogin so regulates his breathing that the inhaling (*pūraka*), keeping the breath in (*kumbhaka*), and exhaling (*recaka*) are paced equally. He inhales through one nasal passage and exhales through the other, and then reverses the process. Holding his breath takes longest when he pushes it through his suṣumṇā channel. This process helps to rouse his individual consciousness (*kuṇḍalinī*) and to elevate it towards the Ultimate consciousness. It is the most important of all yogic techniques and Tantrics practising ṣaḍaṅga-yoga (with six constituents) always start with *prāṇāyāma*.[16]

ŚT mentions two types of *prāṇāyāma*: one accompanied with *japa* and *dhyāna* of the mantra and its deity; and the other practising *prāṇāyāma* without any *japa* or *dhyāna* (ŚT 25, 20-23). Furthermore it states that these two types should be practised one after the other and that long practice of *prāṇāyāma* produces several symptoms indicating approaching success in gaining control over the senses.

Pratyāhāra, the fifth step has virtually been covered by our account of *prāṇāyāma*. It aims at controlling the functions of the senses in order to prevent the mind from being diverted by external sense objets. This is a process that reverses the mind from the outer world to one's inner self. Attention is prevented from wandering from object to object and is turned inwards (interiorized). This is achieved by blocking the functions of all other nāḍīs, excepting the suṣumṇā.

Dhāraṇā, the sixth step is described as holding the vital air at a certain place (ŚT 25, 25). It aims at focussing the mind on a given point. For Tantrics this point is some centre within one's own body. These centres are scattered all over the body. The ŚT names the following: toes, ankles, knees, thighs, frenum of the prepuce, genitals, navel, heart, neck (*ghaṇṭikā*), throat, base of the palate (*lambikā*),[17] point between the eyebrows, forehead, crown and

[16] V. V. Dwiveda, op. cit., pp. 117-119.

[17] Between viśuddha and ājñā cakras, at the base of the crown is the centre called lambikā. This cakra usually falls outside the group of six cakras but holds an important place in another system of nine cakras. This latter series of cakras is followed by the Kaula yogins of the Tripurā sect. See Amṛtānanda's Commentary on YHT 3, 146.

brahmarandhra. Bhāskararāya on the other hand gives a different list of nine points: the six cakras; two thousand-petaled lotuses, one below the mūlādhāra, and one above the crown; and *lambikāgra* (comm. on BhāvUp p. p. 277).

7. *The culminating stages of Eightfold Yoga*

The final steps of yoga, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* concern pure meditation and realization of saving knowledge by means of intuitive insight. They are described as follows:

Dhyāna is fixedly contemplating one's deity as within one's own self (ŚT 25, 26). Sometimes the Tantric's guru is also the object of dhyāna. The KT speaks of contemplation on a gross form and on a subtle form. The first entails contemplation on a particular form of the deity; whereas the second, which is the final stage of dhyāna, entails contemplation on infinite and boundless absolute knowledge — Brahman, which is illumination (KT IX, 3-9). In his commentary on ŚT 25, 26 Rāghavabhaṭṭa mentions *sagarbha-dhyāna* and *vigarbha-dhyāna*, respectively meaning *dhyāna* on an object with form, and *dhyāna* on an object without form. The latter is indeed the culmination of *dhyāna* and is known as *samādhi*, or the eighth constituent of yoga.

Samādhi is attained when in deep contemplation the yogin becomes unconscious of any distinction, discrimination or awareness of anything extraneous to the Absolute Reality. This is sometimes described as ecstasy, resulting from self-realization. This stage is reached when the yogin experiences yoga or union, the union of the individual self with the Supreme Self. The experience is totally devoid of any notion of differentiation, and is likened to a void, or illumination (see ŚT 25, 27, and Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary thereon).[18]

8. *Laya/Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*

In Pātañjala Yoga samādhi is the consummatory stage of the whole process. However, in Tantric yoga the saving realization is more specifically attained by Kuṇḍalinī and Mantra Yoga which supervene on the earlier scheme. We must now describe Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, the *cakras* and the *granthis* (nodes), and say something of the identification of macrocosm with microcosm and the ultimate one-ness of the Supreme Reality, which is the source of all.

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[18] The same two types of dhyāna are also called *saguna* and *nirguna* respectively. See Rāghavabhaṭṭa's comm. on ŚT 25, 26-27 and YTU 104-105.

The Layayoga[19] states that since the macrocosm and microcosm both owe their creation to Brahman and Prakṛti, they are closely related, or might even be considered identical. Therefore knowledge of the microcosm automatically results in knowledge of the macrocosm. On the individual level, the phenomenal world functions when Kuṇḍalinī, the infinitesimal part of the Cosmic Energy (Śakti), lies asleep in the individual's mūlādhāra. By awakening her, and bringing her up to the point just above the top of the suṣumṇā, called the sahasrāra cakra, where the Cosmic Energy — the aggregate of all Kuṇḍalinīs — resides in inseparable union with Parama Śiva (Brahman, the Supreme Rality), and there merging her with the Cosmic Energy, the yogin is able to obtain spiritual release from the bondage of this world and everything worldly. We can see in the process that symbolically he has reversed the process of creation and effected the reabsorption of the world (and himself) into an undifferentiated unity. This process is known as Laya.

The yogin's spine is assimilated to *Meru*, the cosmic central mountain, and is called *brahmadaṇḍa* (Brahmā's stick, i.e., the axis mundi). Thus the centre of the yogin's mystic body is the centre of the world. The suṣumṇā is inside it, so it is hollow like a bamboo. In the suṣumṇā exists the entire manifest world in concentrated form. Ranged vertically along it are six centres called 'wheels' (*cakra*), each of which is conceived as a stylized lotus inhabited by a deity and containing the constituents of both physical and sonic creation (see pp. 52, 93). Above this series of six cakras exists the topmost wheel, sahasrāra (thousand-spoked) just above the yogin's head.

The five cosmic gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara, and Sadāśiva, the five gross elements (*bhūtas*) with their respective subtle essences (*tanmātras*) and their *bījamantras*, each of the manifest motor organs, as well as each of the cognitive organs belonging to each of these five elements — all these are envisaged as situated in the first five cakras within the suṣumṇā. Thus the whole structure of the primary creation of physical phenomena is within reach of the yogin's contemplative vision, so that step by step he can dissolve it back to its primordial source. In the ājñā-cakra are the very first three elements of the manas group, the first three evolutes of prakṛti — the source of phenomenal creation. For practical purposes the yoga accepts only one mind-element (see Frauwallner, pp. 139-140). Laya-yoga enables the yogin to go beyond prakṛti, by passing through the opening in the suṣumṇā at the *brahmarandhra* and merging in the absolute Reality inside the sahasrāra-cakra. The yogin's journey towards his source and eventual union with the

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[19] Layayoga Saṃhitā, 2, 1-3.

cosmic Reality is symbolized by turning the faces of the six lotuses upwards towards this cosmic Reality. During the state of creation they remain pointing downwards. Hence this process of *samādhi*, or reunion with the cosmic Reality, is often described as the spiritual practice of reversion (*ultā-sādhanā*. See S. B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 3rd ed. 1969, pp. 229-235).

Similarly the *mātṛkās*, the primary sonic emanation and the source of the rest of the sonic creation (see pp. 93ff.) are situated on the petals of the lotuses of these six cakras. Uttara mālinī (see Ch. IV, p. 97) on the other hand remains on the petals of the lotus of the sahasrāra cakra (see chart).

9. *Kuṇḍalinī* is the consciousness (*cit-śakti*) which, as a result of the evolutionary process of creation, becomes limited as *jīva* (a living being). After having created the grossest of all basic elements — the solid (*pṛthivī*, i.e. the earth) — this cit-śakti ceases to function as it were, because from then on the created universe functions almost automatically. Hence it is conceived that Kuṇḍalinī, encased in each individual being, just goes to sleep. As soon as this power is roused from her slumber, she proceeds to revert to her real existence as undifferentiated from the ultimate Reality. She is called Kuṇḍalinī, as she is visualized as a coiled snake lying inside the lowest cakra, *mūlādhāra*. Since *cit-śakti* is identified with the Goddess, the Cosmic Woman, Kuṇḍalinī is referred to as feminine.[20]

10. We must now describe the cakras in detail. Though their number varies in different schools, usually they are said to be six.[21] They are arranged in a vertical hierarchy to emphasize the spiritual stages attained through direct experience of cosmic causal realities, passing from the gross to increasingly subtle and pure forms. The set of six cakras (*ṣaṭ-cakra*) is: *mūlādhāra* (or *ādhāra*), *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipūra(-ka)*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha* (or *viśuddhi*) and *ājñā*. The mūlādhāra is at the bottom of the spine, and the series rises till *ājñā* cakra which is in the centre between the eye-brows. Each cakra is envisaged as a stylized lotus, with a large pericarp and a number of petals. Each lotus is sometimes identified with a particular goddess (*śakti*), or that goddess is considered to exist in it (see KAN 21, 30-80; and 140; YHT 3, 33).

Mūlādhāra is a red lotus with four petals. It is red like the rising sun

[20] Kuṇḍalinī is envisaged as the Goddess — the divine Energy, subtle as the fine fibre of a lotus stalk and not fully manifest. Therefore she is visualized as lying coiled to conceal her divine glory.

[21] See note 17; see also YHT 1, 25; NT 7, 1 and Kṣemarāja's comm. thereof.

and the letters *va, śa, ṣa* and *sa* are respectively stamped on its petals. The kāmarūpa-pīṭha (see Ch. I, p. 38) is situated here, and the lotus is situated in the middle between the anus and the penis. There is a bulb or pericarp in it (*kanda or mūlakanda*), and in the middle of the lotus is a triangle (*yoni*), often compared to a water-chestnut (*śṛṅgāṭaka*). Inside the pericarp is the square, symbol of pṛthivī (element of solidity) and the *bīja-mantra* of that element, namely *laṃ*. Brahmā resides there and so does Kandarpa (the god Eros), as identified with *apāna vāyu* (the apāna breath or air). The *bīja* of *pṛthivī* is mounted on an elephant and carries the Creator (Brahmā).[22] The śakti of this centre is Ḍākinī, who is red, has four arms and shines with beauty. She is the bearer of the revelation of pure intelligence. Inside the triangle, which is called kāmarūpa-pīṭha, is the svayambhū-liṅga (phallic symbol of Śiva). This is of the colour of gold and is turned downwards. Its shape is like a bud and its head is slightly depressed. Covering it is the Kuṇḍalinī, fine as the fibre of a lotus-stalk. She (Kuṇḍalinī) is the Goddess Māyā, who bewilders the created. She covers the mouth of the svayambhū-liṅga with her own mouth and is coiled around it three and a half times, like a sleeping snake. Her murmur sounds like the drone of innumerable intoxicated bees (ŚT p. 560; Rāghavabhaṭṭa comm. KAN 21, 25-36; ṢN 5-11).

Svādhiṣṭhāna, the second cakra, is inside the *suṣumṇā-nāḍī* and is situated at the root of the penis. This is a vermilion-red lotus with six petals, upon which the letters *ba, bha, ma, ya, ra,* and *la* are respectively stamped. This is the region of the element of liquidity (water), envisaged here as a half-moon in the pericarp of the lotus. The bīja-mantra of this element is *vaṃ*, which is mounted on a *makara* (trunked dolphin), and Viṣṇu is seated within the point of the nasal in *vaṃ*. Here Rākiṇī is the presiding śakti (goddess), who has four arms and holds in her hands a trident, thunder, a lotus and a kettledrum. She has three eyes, fierce fangs, and is terrifying.

Maṇipūra is conceived as a ten-petaled lotus of dark cloud-colour. On these petals are the letters from *ḍa* to *pha*. This is the region of the fire-element, and the *bīja* of fire is envisaged in the pericarp as *raṃ*, which is within a triangle — the symbol of fire. The fire is seated on a ram, is radiant as the sun, and carries Rudra (Śiva).[23] This centre is situated at the base of the navel and its śakti is Lākinī.

Anāhata. This is a twelve-petaled lotus situated in the heart. It is of a tawny

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[22] This is the region of the body in which sensations of desire that stimulate procreatory acts are experienced. Therefore Kāma, the god of love and Brahmā, the progenitor are envisaged in this centre.

[23] KAN 21, 50 puts Brahmā in this centre.

colour and the letters *ka* to *ṭha* are stamped on its petals. The element of air (gaseity) is within this centre, and is represented by a hexagonal figure of smoky gray colour containing the *bīja* of air (*yaṃ*), which is mounted on an antelope. This centre is called *anāhata*, because here one can experience the original sound produced without any physical cause (i.e. without striking two objects together). Kākinī is the śakti of this lotus. She is yellow in colour and looks intoxicated. Four-armed, she holds in three hands the drum, the spear and the noose, whilst her other hand is held in the gesture of protection. In the pericarp of the lotus is a triangle, and inside that is the *bāṇaliṅga* (another phallic symbol of Śiva's), which has an orifice on top. In the bīja *yaṃ* is the god Īśa, who has three eyes and four hands. One should meditate on the Pūrṇagiri-pīṭha in this centre (KAN 21, 63). It should be noted that this lotus is different from an eight-petaled lotus situated just below it. This second lotus of the heart is called *ānanda kanda* (rooted in bliss), and is the residence of one's favourite (*iṣṭa*) deity. This lotus stands apart from the group of six that is of such importance in Kuṇḍalinī-yoga.

Viśuddha, envisaged as a sixteen-petaled lotus placed in the throat, is regarded as the locus of speech (*bhāratīsthāna*). All the sixteen vowels from *a* to *aḥ* are stamped on its petals. It is of a smoky colour and in its pericarp is the region of ether (space), represented by a circle. Inside the circle is the bīja of the element of ether, namely *khaṃ*, mounted on a white elephant. In the *bīja* dwells Sadāśiva as *ardhanārīśvara* (an androgynous form). He has five heads and ten arms, and is clothed in a tiger's skin. The śakti here is Śākinī, purer than the ocean of nectar. She is terrible in form and is permanently intoxicated.

Ājñā, situated between the eyebrows, is a two-petaled white lotus. The letters *ha* and *kṣa* are stamped on these two petals. The Kaulāvalī-nirṇaya calls it the place of *manonmanī* (beyond the scope of mind), which is the place of *bindu* (i.e. *paśyantī*, see p. 97). In the pericarp is a triangle in which Hākinīśakti resides. She holds one hand in the gesture of granting boons, and in the other three she respectively holds a drum, a skull and a rosary. She has six faces and is white in colour. Inside the triangle is the *itaraliṅga* (another phallic symbol). Here exist the manastattva and the highest of *mantra-bījas*, like *oṃ* or *hrīṃ* and pure intelligence, which is usually envisaged as a flame. Above the triangle is the point of the nasal (*anusvāra*) at the end of the bīja. Above that is the crescent of the nasal resonance, above which is the *bindu* which is called Rodhinī or Bodhinī. Above *bindu* is *nāda*, white as the diffused rays of the moon. The deity in this centre is parama Śiva (the supreme Śiva). The Jālandharapīṭha is envisaged here in this cakra.

Generally speaking, all these lotuses face downwards to symbolize the condition of procreation and decentralization, as well as the fragmentation of the central, integral Reality. In Laya-yoga however the process of decentralization is arrested and turned into the concentric process of cosmogonic involution, whereby each effect is merged in its immediately preceeding cause until all differences are finally merged in the supreme source. This is symbolized by reversing the lotuses, i.e. by turning their faces upwards. The process is envisaged as Kuṇḍalinī's journey through all these six lotuses, and is described as the piercing (*bheda*) of the cakras. *Jīvātman* (the individual self) is identified with Kuṇḍalinī and resides in the *mūlādhāra*, while *antarātman* (the essential self) resides in the *ājñā-cakra*.

11. *Nodes (granthi)*

Within the region of the six cakras, three nodes (granthi or blocking-points) are situated. These are so named because at these points the yogin encounters particular obstruction on his spiritual journey. The first of these nodes is situated in the *mūlādhāra* and is called the *brahma-granthi*. But there are differences of opinion about its situation. Some texts place it in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, while others go so far as to put it in the maṇipūra, which would scarcely be credible. The *viṣṇu-granthi* — the second node — is said to be the door to the *anāhatacakra* — and is situated in that cakra.[24] This is the second barrier the yogin must overcome in order to enter the region of the cosmic elements. The third node is situated in the *ājñā-cakra*. It is called the *rudra-granthi*, which is as it were the door to perfect union with the divine and total elimination of the experience of duality (see the Yogaśikhopaniṣad 1, 83-87 and the comm. of Śrī Upaniṣadbrahmayogī thereon).

Apparently the suṣamṇā-nāḍī is not hollow all the way through. Just as the hollow in the centre of the bamboo branch is closed at nodes (*granthi*), so too is the *suṣumṇā* closed at its bottom, middle and top by three joints acting as doors. Just as one has to burn holes in the bamboo-joints in order to obtain an uninterrupted passage, so also must the three aforesaid nodes in the suṣumṇā be pierced before Kuṇḍalinī can reach the *sahasrāra cakra*. Once the piercing has been done, she has no difficulty in achieving union with the cosmic Energy (and with the cosmic Reality), and the same holds for the yogin.

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[24] There are two schools of opinion on the location of Viṣṇu granthi. The second school maintains that this granthi is in maṇipūra cakra.

It should be noted that the Yoginī Hṛdaya (3, 139) speaks of twelve nodes, as it counts two nodes in each of the six cakras, with one at each end of a cakra. The NT (7, 22-25) confirms this view, with a slight variation.

12. *The awakening of Kuṇḍalinī*

Kuṇḍalinī, victim of her own delusion, remains as it were asleep in the *mūlādhāra*. She can be roused by holding the breath (*kumbhaka*) while, through special posture and tightening the muscles in the region of the *mūlādhāra*, the *apāna vāyu* is stimulated. In normal breathing, the *prāṇa* and *apāna vāyus* circulate through iḍā and piṅgalā, and Kuṇḍalinī obtains sustenance in the natural way. When the normal method of breathing is stopped, the sustenance ceases and Kuṇḍalinī wakes up. Then the pressure of *apāna* opens the mouth of the suṣumṇā, through which Kuṇḍalinī starts rising up. As she does that, all the other nāḍīs connected with the external sense-organs stop functioning, and the yogin's awareness of the external world is blotted out. Mūlādhāra being the container of the element of earth, whose subtle essence is the subtle element of smell, Kuṇḍalinī's departure from mūlādhāra marks the dissolution of the earth into its essence, the smell and the latter in due course into the water-element. Kuṇḍalinī then reaches *svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra*, which is the locus of the water-element. Here, the latter is dissolved into its cause, the subtle element of taste (*rasa*) and, as Kuṇḍalinī leaves this centre on her way to maṇipūra-cakra, the subtle element of taste is dissolved into the fire-element. In *maṇipūra-cakra*, the fire-element is dissolved in its essence, the subtle element of form, which is in its turn dissolved into the air-element. As Kuṇḍalinī rises to *anāhata-cakra*, the locus of the air-element and its essence, the subtle element of touch, the air-element is merged into the touch and the latter into the ether-element. Kuṇḍalinī then proceeds to *viśuddha-cakra*, the substratum of ether and its essence, the subtle element of sound. Here too, the former element is merged into the latter and the latter into its cause the mind.

From there Kuṇḍalinī rises to *ājñā-cakra*, the locus of the cosmic creative reality, the mind. As she leaves behind the gross elements with their essences, constituting the gross body of the individual self, this self, already identified with Kuṇḍalinī at the beginning of the Kuṇḍalinī Yoga, also rises above the gross body. That is to say, the yogin's conscious identification of his self with his gross physical body ceases. In *ājñā-cakra* he is only aware of his subtle body consisting of mind, which includes individuation (*ahaṃkāra*), as well as discriminatory intelligence (*buddhi*). All the essences of

knowledge and action are connected with this subtle cosmic reality. This is the last centre in which consciousness of duality exists. Hence it is symbolized as a lotus with two petals. Here the element of mind is merged into *ahaṃkāra*, its cause; which in turn is dissolved into its immediate cause *buddhi*. At that moment the discriminatory intelligence changes into pure intelligence and the symbolic shape for meditation is given to be that of a flame (see Dīpikā of Amṛtānanda on YHT 3, 172-174). Pure intelligence is merged into the cosmic source, Matter or *Prakṛti*.

While describing the *ājñā-cakra* we have seen that the gradual elimination of differentiation experienced by the yogin on the sonic level has been represented by the nasal (*anusvāra*), the crescent (*ardhacandra*), which represents the resonance, the bindu which is Rodhinī or Bodhinī and then nāda, arranged in an ascending order. In the *ājñā-cakra* the last of the manifest sound is experienced as the pure bīja-mantra. The yogin then passes to the region of *bindu*, the unmanifest sound and from there to the region of causal sound nāda. In the yogin's mystic body this causal stage (*kāraṇāvasthā*) is visualized to exist between *ājñā-cakra* and *sahasrāra*. The individual self leaves back his subtle body in *ājñā-cakra* and becomes merged in his causal body (*kāraṇa śarira*), which is Prakṛti. This region between *ājñā-cakra* and *sahasrāra* is divided into eight steps representing the gradual fusion of the sonic and phenomenal emanations leading to the final merger of the individual self into the supreme Energy in sahasrāra. An interesting point is that, though the phenomenon of mind is apparently left behind in *ājñā-cakra*, meditation, a mental exercise, continues till the very last point, the eighth step. These points or steps of experience are: the crescent; Bodhinī or Rodhinī; nāda, which is considered the united form of Śiva and Śakti; mahānāda (the supreme nāda) or nādānta (end of nāda), conceived in the shape of a plough; śakti (ṢN does not recognise it, *Serpent Power*, p. 140); *vyāpikā-śakti*, which is envisaged as a crooked line; *samanī-śakti* and *unmanī-śakti*. All these eight are envisaged in a vertical hierarchical order to emphasize the spiritual progress of the yogin.[25] Unmanī literally means beyond mind, signifying that at this stage of meditative experience the yogin rises above all limitations of the mind.

Above all these is the supreme cakra, *sahasrāra*. This is a white lotus, the face of which is turned downwards. It is situated above the suṣumṇā in an open space. Well hidden in the pericarp of this is the subtle (void), where

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[25] See YHT 3, 173 and Amṛtānanda's commentary thereof. One should note that the Śāktas maintain that before Vyāpikā is the Śakti which is equated with the cosmic matter, Prakṛti.

all polarity ends. There the nirvāṇakalā[26] exists, and this is the aspect of the cosmic Energy when she is completely fused with the supreme Reality, the supreme Śiva. After having pierced the six cakras, Kuṇḍalinī merges into nirvāṇakalā, so named as this merger brings nirvāṇa (liberation) to the yogin. In this way Kuṇḍalinī unites with the Supreme Śiva. There in ultimate harmony, she is saturated with amṛta, bliss, but only for a time. Because soon she works her way back to *ājñā-cakra* and, from thence through all the other cakras, back to the mūlādhāra. But since she is now saturated with amṛta, the suṣumṇā and all these cakras also get filled with amṛta as she passes through them. Then as she saturates the mūlādhāra, all the other thirteen nāḍīs besides suṣumṇā which are connected with this cakra imbibe amṛta too; and the yogin's entire sensory system thus becomes saturated with amṛta (bliss), and he experiences both enlightenment and ecstacy.

The sahasrāra-lotus is situated above the crown of the head. In its pericarp is a triangle (yoni), with its apex turned downwards. Here the suṣumṇā terminates in an aperture called brahmarandhra. Kuṇḍalinī passes through this opening in order to reach sahasrāra-cakra.

For another account of enlightenment we return to the theory of the nodes. YHT calls these "obstacles" (3.94).

At each of these junctures we find a triangle representing Śakti (*yoni*), a *liṅga* (Śiva's phallic symbol) and a granthi. Another Tantric philosophical theory about these three joints gives an even clearer explanation. Ultimate Reality, through the mediation of its power (*śakti*), projects itself in creation as *rūpātīta*, *rūpa*, *pada*, and *piṇḍa*. The last is the gross form corresponding to the *jāgrat* (waking) state of the individual self. Pada, rūpa and rūpātīta indicate the gradual sublimation of the ātman (self), corresponding respectively to the *svapna*, *suṣupti* and *turīya* states.[27] Mūlādhāra corresponds with *piṇḍa*, *anāhata* with *pada*, *ājñā* with *rūpa*, and *sahasrāra* with *rūpātīta*. The first three states are planes in which duality is experienced; hence the symbolism of a yoni and a liṅga at each juncture in a physically united form, yet retaining their difference. This is emphasised by envisaging one pīṭha at each such juncture. In the last state, this difference disappears completely, and Śiva and Śakti are almost merged, except for the slight distinction that they exist as the Self, and its awareness of itself. This is the *turīya* state. Śākta philosophy of course envisages the fifth state of *turyātīta*, the

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[26] Kalā, the cosmic Energy is in this context called *nirvāṇa* (extinction, liberation) because instead of effecting emanation the Energy, in which the yogin's individual energy is merged, caused his release. See Arthur Avalon, *The Serpent Power*, p. 143.

[27] YHT 3, 94; see also the two commentaries Dīpikā and Setubandha thereof.

Absolute, undifferentiated state. But whilst alive the yogin does not enter that fifth state, so that he may still return to mundane life for the benefit of other beings, without however having to forfeit communion with the Divine.[28]

It is said that the lowest cakra, *mūlādhāra*, is where prakṛti predominates; in all other intermediary cakras both prakṛti and Śiva have equal influence; but in the seventh (i.e., the sahasrāra), only Śiva *Nirañjana* (Śiva of flawless purity) dominates. Yet even here Śiva is still saguṇa or sakala, that is in union with the cosmic Energy. (ṢN. with Viśvanātha's commentary p. 129).

13. *Mantra Yoga*

As explained by Arthur Avalon (*Serpent Power*, p. 186), Mantra-yoga recommends worship of the mantra and its deity. By concentrating on the mantra, the yogin contemplates deeply on the origin of speech, the letters (*mātṛkā*). Going back to the source of manifest sound (*vaikharī*), he proceeds to understand the unmanifest original sound, and to experience it. The system is based on the concept of *śabdabrahman* as the supreme reality in the form of absolute sound (see p. 52f.). Another name for this reality is *nādabrahman*. This is the neutral and ineffable state. Before creation started, *nādabrahman* becomes aware that it is impending, and this awareness becomes his potential sound-form (*ṣoḍaśī-kalā*), which is called *bindu* or *Paśyantī*. It is also identified with the cosmic Energy (Śakti). In the Tantric view, *nāda* and *bindu* are identical with *Prakāśa-* and *Vimarśa-Śakti* — the cosmic Energy in respectively her ineffable conscious aspect, and in her potential, dynamically creative aspect. In the third state of the cosmic primordial source, the sound-principle is called Madhyamā, unmanifested sound manifesting itself in *vaikharī* sound. Mantras are the highest forms of manifest sound and are the perfect media for experiencing the Supreme *śabdabrahman*. By constant contemplation on the true nature of his mūla-mantra, the Tantric realizes the very essence of the mantra, and by practising *prāṇāyāma*, he closes all the doors of his senses from functioning and forces his two breaths *prāṇa* and *apāna* into his two 'veins' *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, and thus blocks the flight of mind out of his inner self. Thus, restricted, the mind is then forced to enter his middle 'vein' *suṣumṇā*, where its natural propensity causes it to rise to a higher spiritual level until it passes from the manifest world to the world of unmanifest sound.

[28] Premānanda Sarasvatī, Pūjātattva, Ed. Gopinath Kaviraj, Varanasi samvat 2014, p. 55.

Kuṇḍalinī is roused by Mantra Yoga. If properly conducted, *japa* can evoke the mantra's power (*śakti*) and, through devotion and devotional acts, that power can be persuaded to help the yogin to rouse Kuṇḍalinī. It is indeed the sounds of the mantra — especially of its seed-mantra and the lengthened impression of its final nasal sound — that ultimately, as mentioned before, manifest *nāda*. The greatest of all seed-mantra is oṃ (*praṇava*), though for some Śākta yogins seeds like *aiṃ* or *hrīṃ*, remain supreme. The greatest of all mantras is the *haṃsa*, the mantra of the self. While performing its japa, its deity, ātman, is envisaged in the heart. At the same time, the yogin slowly immerses his mind in that mantra, which ultimately results in merging both his mind and his prāṇa in it. This is the first achievement of what is called *ajapā-sādhanā*. After long practice of the *haṃsa-mantra*, its letters or rather its sounds are reversed and the mantra becomes *so 'ham* (I am He). At the end of this second stage, distinctions between *prāṇa*, the mantra and its deity fade away. In the final stage, all discriminatory impressions have disappeared and, with them, so has the mind. This is in effect the same as the last part of the Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. The *ajapā japa* continues automatically and the yogin experiences total union with the supreme Reality. Bhāskararāya in his Varivasyārahasya, part two, gives an excellent account of how Tripurā's fifteen-lettered mantra, divided in three clusters, is assimilated with Kuṇḍalinī Yoga and how the meditation on this mantra culminates into the merger (*laya*) of the yogin in the undifferentiated supreme Reality.

Similarly, japa and meditation on *oṃ*, observed in the same way lead to the acquisition of great yogic power (*siddhi*). Following the method of merger (*laya*), the yogin, especially the Haṭha-yogin, experiences the true nature of nādabrahman, which is Kuṇḍalinī's own true nature.

14. *Haṭha Yoga*

The aim of Haṭha Yoga is to acquire perfect knowledge through a perfected body and mind, which eventually leads to immortality devoid of any kind of physical or mental ailment. The method followed is very strenuous; but if successfully carried out enables the yogin to supersede the processes of nature and overcome all psycho-physical limitations. Such a yogin conquers the limitation of time, and can see the past, present and future; he is no longer subject to the limitation of space and can reach any place at unprecedented speed; he can fly or float in any posture and can assume any form. This mastery over his physical body finally enables him to experience supreme knowledge (*mahābodha*) of his identity with the Absolute Being — the supreme reality. In this respect Haṭha-yoga differs from Mantra Yoga

in what it ultimately achieves, since in the case of the latter the result attained is not an experience (*bodha*), but the supreme state of being (*mahābhāva*). However, the distinction is somewhat subtle, since the Haṭha-yogin too achieves the state of Śiva, only he achieves it through knowledge. The PrT records that, at the end of his *sādhanā* when suddenly illuminated, the Haṭha-yogin is transformed into the state of Śiva. Since Haṭha-yoga yields perfection (*siddhi*), the Siddhas (certain religious denominations) follow this system (PrT p. 433); whereas the method of Mantra Yoga depends more on the grace (*karuṇā*) of the divine acting through the mantra and its deity. Hence it involves the element of self-dedication, i.e. throwing oneself completely on the mercy of the divine. This is the main characteristic of devotionalism.

15. *The role of the cosmic Sound principle, Nāda*

In all disciplines of Yoga *nādabrahman* or *śabdabrahman* plays a great role. In the case of Mantra Yoga the yogin concentrates on the most subtle form of his mantra, the seed-mantra (*bījamantra*), (YHT 3, 172-178). In meditation the yogin transcends even this monosyllabic sound and gradually reaches the level of pure sound without any syllabic representation. The Kuṇḍalinī in this context is of course identified with the sonic emanation of nāda and with the divine consciousness (*cit kalā*) (see Ch. IV p. 93ff.)* When he practises *pratyāhāra* and stops the senses from functioning, his inner sense becomes aware of *nāda*, the supreme sound, the origin of all creation. At the beginning of the process of ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda, when Kuṇḍalinī starts entering the suṣumṇā, the yogin becomes aware of a ringing sound inside himself.[29] In the next stage, he steadies his vital airs in the suṣumṇā. When he passes the barrier of the *viṣṇu-granthi*, the sound changes into that produced by a kettle-drum. In the third stage, the sound appears to resemble the beating of a tom-tom. In the fourth stage, when he has pierced the *rudra-granthi* and perfect bliss flowing from the supreme bliss seeps into his mind, the sound resembles that of a vīṇā.

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* It may be worth mentioning that the yogins amongst the musicians' circle employ a separate method to experience the supreme sound nādabrahman, through Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. They utilize special musical notes and modes of melody to rouse their Kuṇḍalinī, thus using music in place of mantra. (From an unpublished paper by T. L. Rana).

[29] He must at this stage close his nose, ears and eyes with his fingers as prescribed in the bodily posture called *yonibandha*, to shut out any unvoluntary contact of the senses with external sense-objects. See the illustration in the *Serpent Power*, plate XV.

These four stages are described as: *ārambha* (preliminary), *ghaṭa* (jug filled with only air), *paricaya* (introduction), and *niṣpatti* (achievement). In the first three of these, the yogin experiences *śūnya* (emptiness), *atiśūnya* (great emptiness) and *mahāśūnya* (supreme emptiness) respectively. Obviously a great deal of practice is necessary before even a slight degree of proficiency is achieved in any of these stages.

Dhāraṇā and *ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda* are two separate phases of the same step of yoga. In the beginning the yogin's attention is fixed on the five cosmogonical elements, solids etc. (*mahābhūtas*), as identified with different parts of his body. Next, his attention is fixed on the ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda where the identification is much more detailed and concerns the yogic body concentrated within the suṣumṇā.

Dhyāna is practised all the time. Beginning with the mantra and its deity, where the yogin concentrates on embodied beings and manifest sound (*sākāra dhyāna*), *dhyāna* passes on to the next stage in which concentration is fixed upon illumination (*jyotis*) and on the sound that is not produced by friction between two objects. Incidentally, all dhyānas of Kuṇḍalinī describe her as a flash of lightning that amounts to dazzling illumination. But Laya Yoga goes beyond that and recommends dhyāna on the bindu.

In Tantric lore the word *bindu* has multivalence. *Bindu* is a point or drop, a point is the minutest manifestation of any form and might be the starting point of a complicated pattern. Alternatively, it might represent a centre, the centre of All. *Bindu* in this sense denotes the centre of creation, the source of both sonic and phenomenal creation, the original sound. Taking it to mean a drop, the analogy is based on the drop of semen which developed into cosmic vitality and started phenomenal creation. It is the primary, apprehensible form of Reality on the verge of creation. In a somewhat grosser sense, *bindu* denotes just semen. Thus, the cosmic fecundity is experienced on a lower, individual level. Yogins engaged in Laya Yoga, which is the same as bindusādhanā, hold that just as prāṇāyāma steadies the vital airs it also steadies *bindu*. *Bindu* (semen), like *prāṇa* and the mind, is ever restless and causes distraction and bondage. By steadying it and putting it under restraint, the yogin obtains control over *prāṇa* and the mind. Waste of semen on objects of desire is as ruinous to an individual as waste of his vital airs in useless endeavour. Along with the vital airs, Kuṇḍalinī-yoga envisages sending semen, symbolizing the individual self, up the suṣamṇā duct to the sahasrāra that represents the supreme self. In other words, in living beings the sexual excitement behind intense physical and mental drives is transformed into a drive to reach one's source.

16. *Sexual practices*

Laya-yoga claims to achieve various spiritual results, of which withstanding the attraction of beautiful objects and of delectable food are two examples. The technique adopted seems to be to expose oneself to the allurement without the least reserve and, at the same time, to try to merge one's mind in the subtle elements (*tanmātra*) of form (*rūpa*) and taste (*rasa*). When the yogin succeeds in doing this, the attractions of beauty and of gluttony no longer have any hold over him. Similarly, he identifies his semen with Śiva and the menstrual flow with Śakti — the dual source of creation. By sexually uniting these two, he symbolically achieves the union of Śiva and Śakti within himself. In Haṭha-yoga the practice of *vajrolī*[30] enables him to retain both semen and menstrual flow discharged during coitus in his own body. Regardless of that however, the mingling of these two in actual coitus, or even the mere envisaging of it, suffices to give him the vivid experience of the cosmic union of Śiva and Śakti, and enables him to derive the blissful relaxation that is his natural disposition. Once he realizes the ultimate Truth and his identity with it, he is said to be perfectly relaxed (*sahaja*). Moreover, he experiences the temporary suspension of his own sexual urges, which is what he desires to achieve for good. Finally, by withholding his own orgasm, he directs his sexual drive towards awakening Kuṇḍalinī and dispatching her upon her journey towards sahasrāra. Thus, by using limited pragmatic experiences as models for glimpsing the sublime and by using these as 'spring-boards' for spiritual advancement and for sublimating finite sensations, Laya-yoga recognizes the value of sexual acts.

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[30] See HYP 3, 82-89.

CHART OF THE

Cakra (its colour)	Alphabets on petals of lotus	Cosmic creative principle	Shape of the symbol of the principle	Nodes
sahasrāra (White)		Unmanī Samanī Vyāpikā Śakti mahānāda or nādānta nāda Bodhinī or Rodhinī bindu		
ājñā (white)	*ha* and *kṣa*	mind (citta) = manas, ahaṃkāra and buddhi	circle, flame and point	Rudra-granthi
viśuddha (smoky)	16 vowels, from *a* to *aḥ*	ether and the subtle element of sound	circle	
anāhata (tawny)	the first 12 consonants: *ka* to *ṭha*	air and the subtle element of touch	six-pointed hexagon	Viṣṇu-granthi
maṇipūra (dark cloud)	the next 10 consonants: *ḍa* to *pha*	fire and the subtle element of form	triangle	
svādhiṣṭhāna (vermilion)	the next 6 letters: *ba* to *la*	water and the subtle element of taste (rasa)	half-moon	
mūlādhāra (red)	*va, śa; ṣa, sa*	earth and the subtle element of smell	square	Brahma-granthi

KUṆḌALINĪ YOGA

The bija-mantra of the cosmic element and its vehicle	*Yoginī or the presiding śakti*	*The cosmic deity*	*pīṭha, the special seat of the cosmic Energy*	*liṅga and yoni representing the creative Energy*
			uḍḍiyāna	
oṃ or *hrīṃ*	Hākinī	Paramaśiva	jālandhara	itaraliṅga soma śakti
khaṃ white elephant	Sākinī	Sadāśiva		
yaṃ antelope	Kākinī	Īśa	pūrṇagiri	bāṇaliṅga sūrya śakti
raṃ ram	Lākinī	Rudra		
vaṃ makara	Rākinī	Viṣṇu		
laṃ elephant	Ḍākinī	Brahmā (also Kandarpa)	kāmarūpa	svayambhū-liṅga agni śakti

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INDEX

